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INSIDE THE FIREARMS TACTICS OF THE 'MEDIEVAL TANK'

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

Explore Age of Sail innovations and deadly post-Dreadnought battleships

SIEGE OF LUCKNOW

Gritty garrison defence during the Indian Uprising

FUTURE

ISSUE 077

PRUSSIAN REBEL

How a German officer turned insurgent to resist Napoleon

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April 1917

was the most successful day that the British Expeditionary Force had enjoyed since the beginning of trench warfare on the Western Front in late 1914.

14 British and Canadian divisions attacked on a broad front and captured the high ground of *Vimy Ridge* as well as breaking through the Germans first and second front line trenches. They eventually *'dug-in'* on the German *Third Line* of defence works while awaiting the inevitable enemy counter-attack.

The military success however came at a very high price... More than *150,000* British and Canadian soldiers became casualties... *killed, wounded or missing-in-action.*

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Ford Model "T" Vickers Machine Gun Carrier

FW200

Rescue Under Fire

resting and recovering from the battle.

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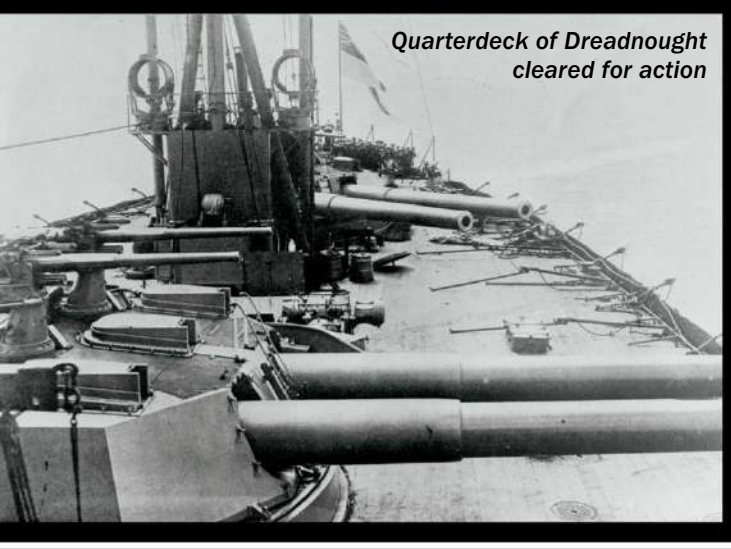
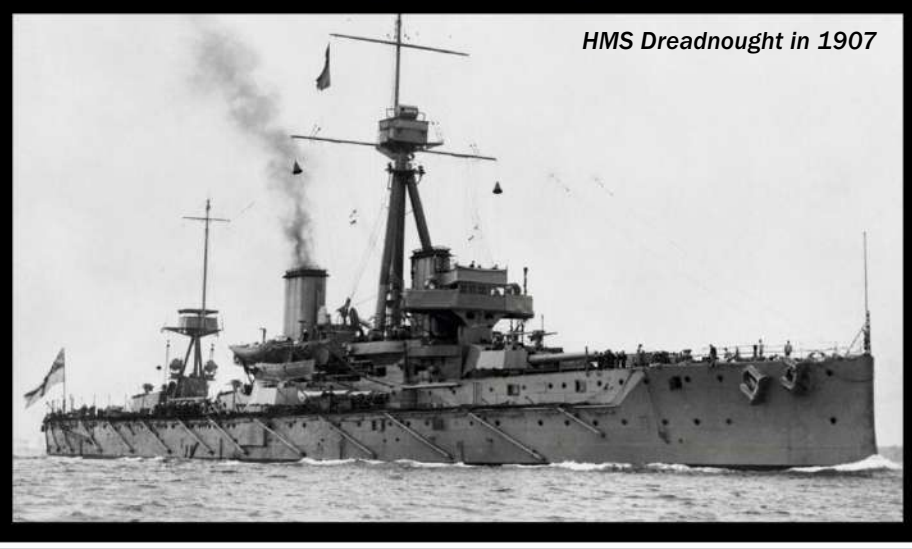
A pair of HMS Dreadnought's 12-inch guns, pictured in 1914. Turn to page 26 for this issue's 20 Greatest Warships main feature

Images: Wiki / Bain News Service



Quarterdeck of Dreadnought cleared for action



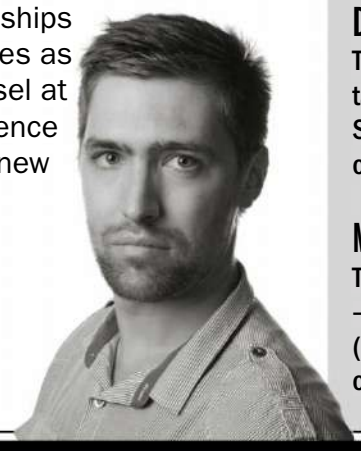
HMS Dreadnought in 1907

HMS Dreadnought fires a broadside

Welcome

"A good navy is not a provocation to war. It is the surest guarantee of peace". President Theodore Roosevelt made this remark at the cusp of a watershed moment in maritime history, just a few years before the launch of HMS Dreadnought. Arguably one of the most significant battleships ever developed, Dreadnought was bristling with almost three-times as many cannons as previous designs, out-gunning every other vessel at the time. Rather than guaranteeing peace Dreadnought's emergence triggered an arms race, and global powers sought to match this new level of naval capability in the buildup to the First World War.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief



CONTRIBUTORS

TOM GARNER

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Tom spoke with Mindu Hornick MBE, a Holocaust survivor now living in the UK. She shares her experiences of the camp and work to educate future generations (page 52).

DR BERNARD WILKIN

This month, French military and Napoleonic expert Bernard takes a look at the short-lived rebellion of Ferdinand von Schill, a Prussian Major who in 1809 fought against French occupation, despite overwhelming odds (page 46).

MARK SIMNER

This issue's Great Battles explores the Siege of Lucknow – a long and brutal struggle during the Indian Uprising (1857-8). Mark explores how the garrison held out against overwhelming odds (page 72).

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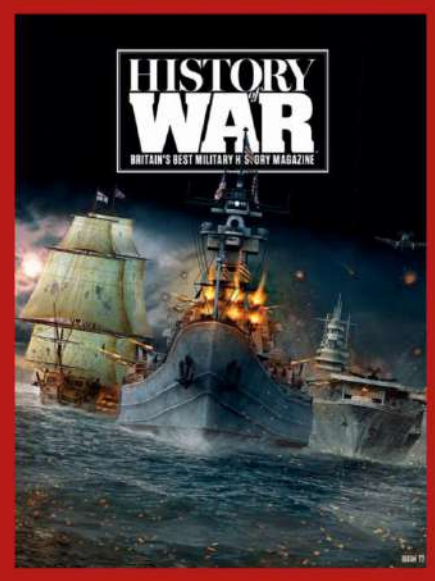

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HERMANN GOERING'S
ART COLLECTION
AIRBORNE
THROUGH THE
COURTESY OF
101 ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

THE ART OF WAR

Taken: ***May 1945***

The 101st Airborne's makeshift exhibition at Berchtesgaden. After the liberation of the area in 1945, troops discovered valuable paintings and sculptures hidden in nearby caves. They had been taken by Hermann Goering from occupied nations during the war. Some of the liberated art on display included Franz Hals's *Portrait of a Priest* and a piece by Rubens.

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

LAST CHOPPER OUT OF XUÂN LOC

Taken: ***April, 1975***

Two Chinook helicopters hover above a road (likely Highway 1) during the evacuation of supplies and soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 18th Division and their families. Located east of Saigon, Xuan Loc was one of the last battles of the Vietnam War.

WAR in FOCUS

DRESDEN OUT OF THE ASHES

Taken: ***1950***

The ruin of the Frauenkirche (right) Dresden's Lutheran church, and in the background the Hofkirche (cathedral) stand among the still ruined remains. After the bombing of Dresden in February 1945, reconstruction projects began across the city, but many of its oldest landmarks remained in their damaged state until the reunification of Germany in 1990.

© Alamy

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

THE WOMEN OF THE REVOLUTION

Taken: ***1979***

Armed Iranian women photographed during the Revolution 1978-9. After Ayatollah Khomeini's return to Tehran on February 1st, 1979, supporters of his proclaimed Islamic Revolution overthrew Shah Pahlavi and proclaimed Khomeini as religious and political leader.

TIMELINE OF THE...

BARONS' WARS

King John and Henry III of England fight rebellious nobles in two bloody conflicts, which also set important precedents for human liberties and rights

SIEGES OF DOVER 02

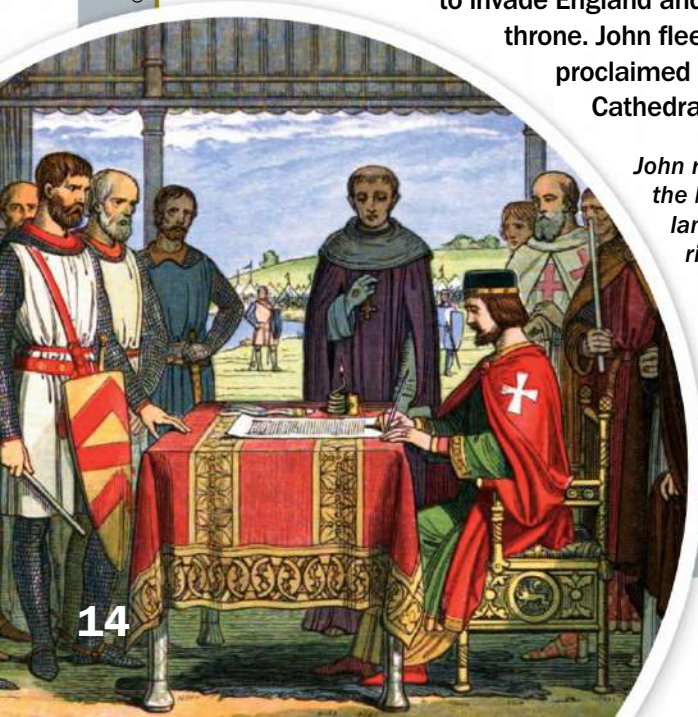
Dover Castle is twice besieged by Louis' forces. Defended by Hubert de Burgh, the fortress successfully holds out despite assaults by various siege engines, mining activities and naval clashes. De Burgh urges his men to not surrender the castle "for it is indeed the key of England".

FIRST BARONS' WAR

1215

MAGNA CARTA SPARKS WAR

When King John refuses to accept and abide by the terms of Magna Carta, rebellious Anglo-Norman barons revoke their fealty to him. They invite Prince Louis of France to invade England and take the English throne. John flees and Louis is proclaimed king at St Paul's Cathedral, London.



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John reluctantly signs the Magna Carta. This landmark charter of rights remains an important symbol of liberty and is held in great respect by British and American politicians and lawmakers

October-December 1215

SIEGE OF ROCHESTER 01

John besieges Rochester Castle against a garrison of rebel knights. The fortress is stoutly defended even after the defenders are forced back into the keep, which itself is partially destroyed. Starvation eventually forces them to surrender.

© Alamy

With its imposing keep, Rochester Castle remains one of the best preserved castles in England

July 1216-August 1217

19 October 1216

DEATH OF KING JOHN

While campaigning in eastern England, John dies of natural causes at Newark Castle. He is succeeded by his nine-year-old son Henry III with William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, being declared as regent. Henry will live to be a central figurehead in both Barons' Wars.

John is buried at Worcester Cathedral with personal orders to be interred near the Anglo-Saxon saints Wulfstan and Oswald

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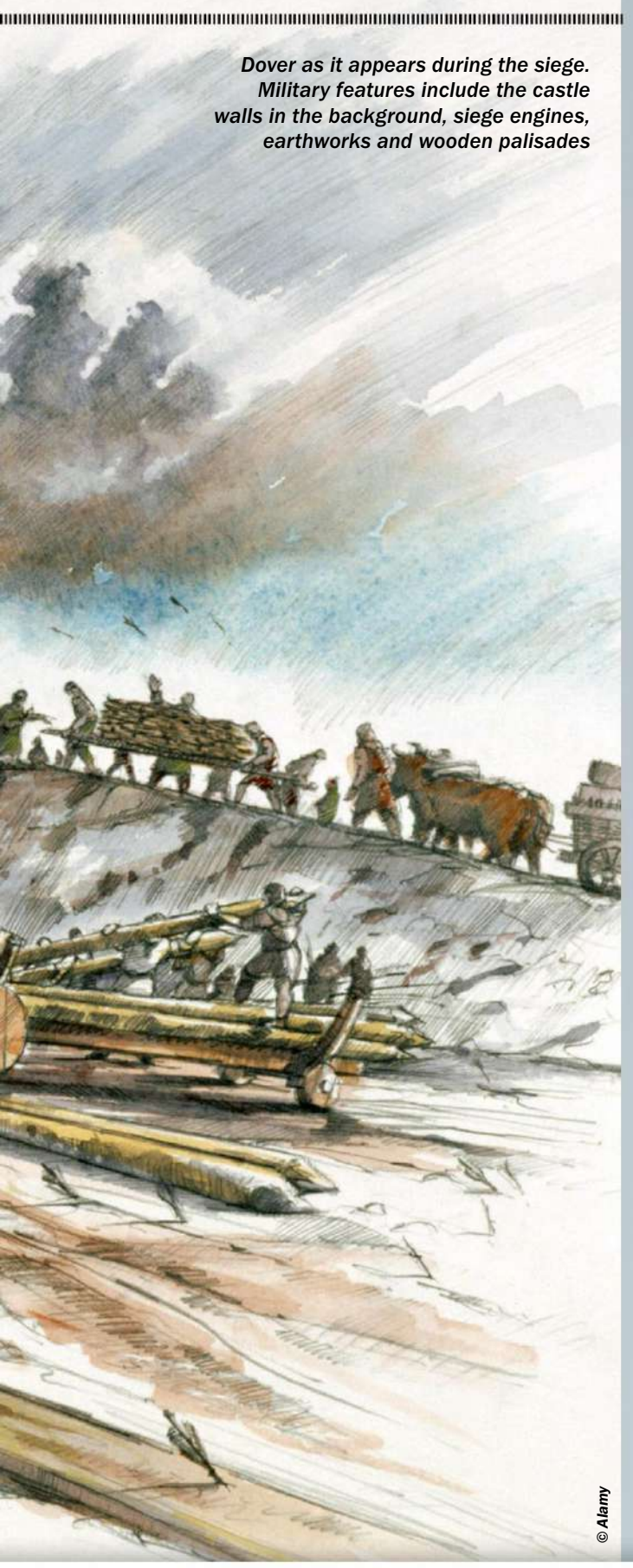

Dover as it appears during the siege. Military features include the castle walls in the background, siege engines, earthworks and wooden palisades

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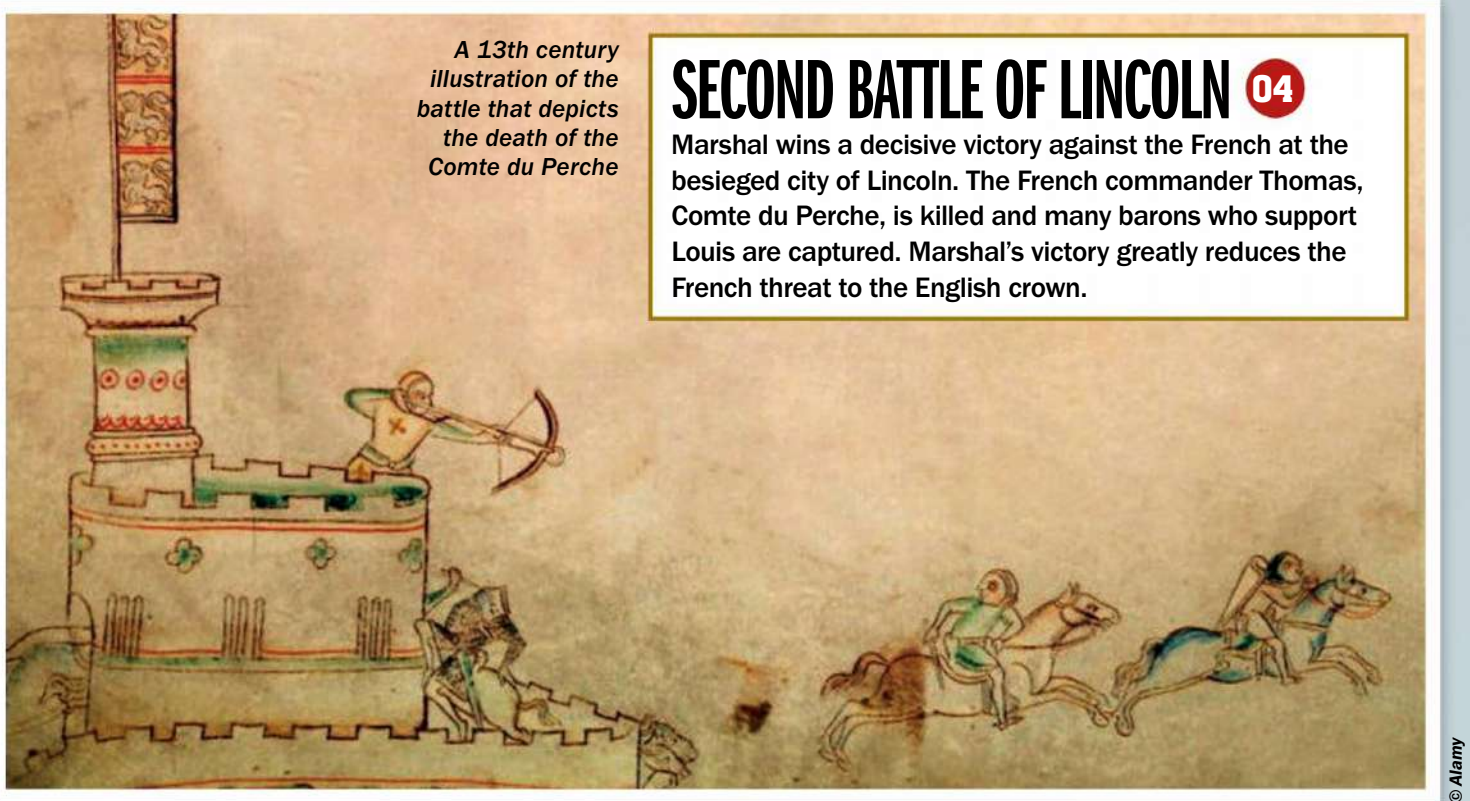

A 13th century illustration of the battle that depicts the death of the Comte du Perche

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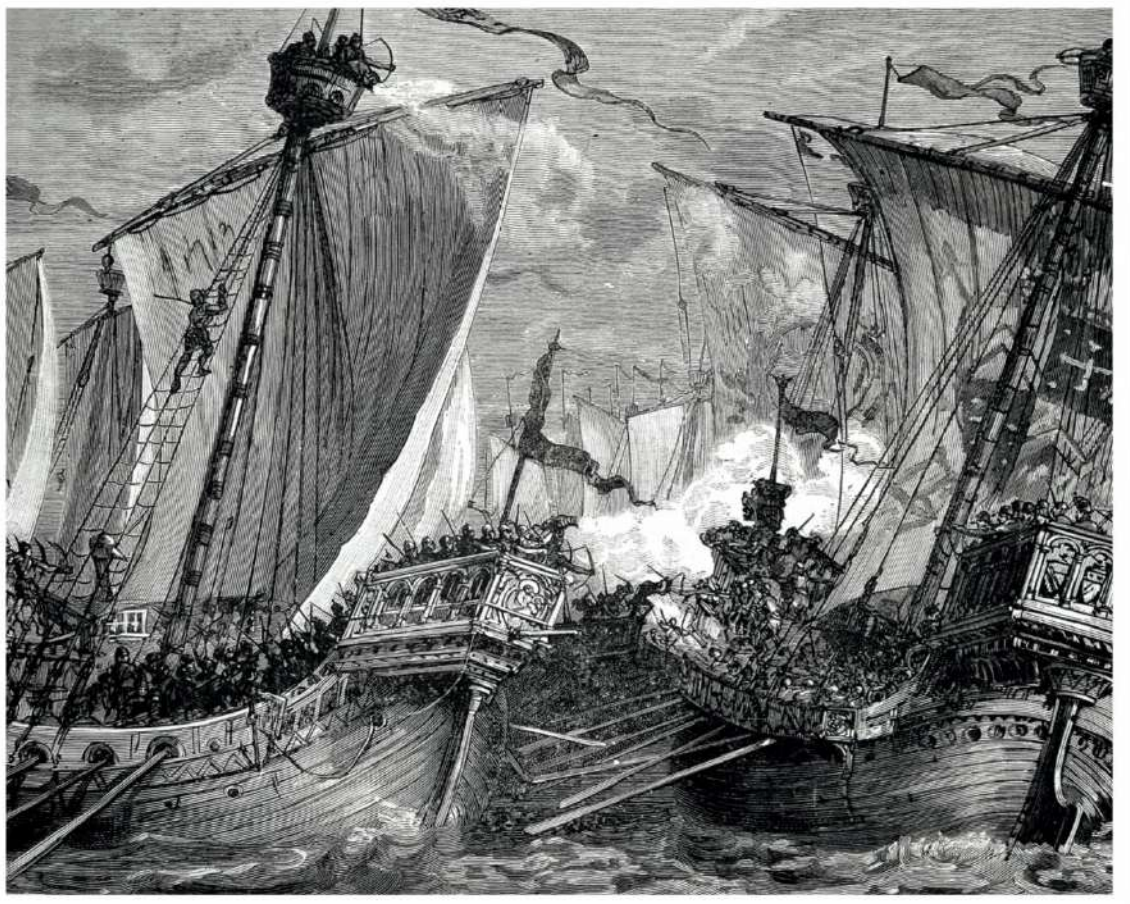
SECOND BATTLE OF LINCOLN 04

Marshal wins a decisive victory against the French at the besieged city of Lincoln. The French commander Thomas, Comte du Perche, is killed and many barons who support Louis are captured. Marshal's victory greatly reduces the French threat to the English crown.

BATTLE OF SANDWICH 05

Hubert de Burgh takes revenge against the French when he defeats their numerically superior fleet off the Kentish coast. The capture of many French ships leaves Louis short of supplies, which convinces him to abandon his effort to conquer England.

This 13th century illustration shows the capture of the French flagship. The battle also saw the killing of the mercenary pirate Eustace the Monk



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12 November-6 December 1216 — 20 May 1217 — 24 August 1217 — September 1217

SIEGE OF HERTFORD 03

Louis besieges the strategically important castle of Hertford. He heavily bombards the fortress with siege engines while his troops ravage the surrounding area over a radius of 20 miles. The castle surrenders after 25 days and Louis moves on to take Berkhamsted.

Virtually nothing remains of Hertford's Medieval fortress although the 14th century postern gate is built into the 11th century wall that surrounds the castle grounds

© Alamy

TREATY OF LAMBETH

The First Barons' War is ended and Louis leaves England in exchange for money. Henry III's rebel barons are given an amnesty while the English crown's possession of the Channel Islands is restored.

King John fights the forces of Prince Louis. The French heir almost became king of England but went on to be crowned Louis VIII of France

© Alamy

MAJOR ENGAGEMENTS

"THIS COMPOSITION FORMS THE BASIS OF AN EMBRYO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND IS CENTRAL TO THE CREATION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS"

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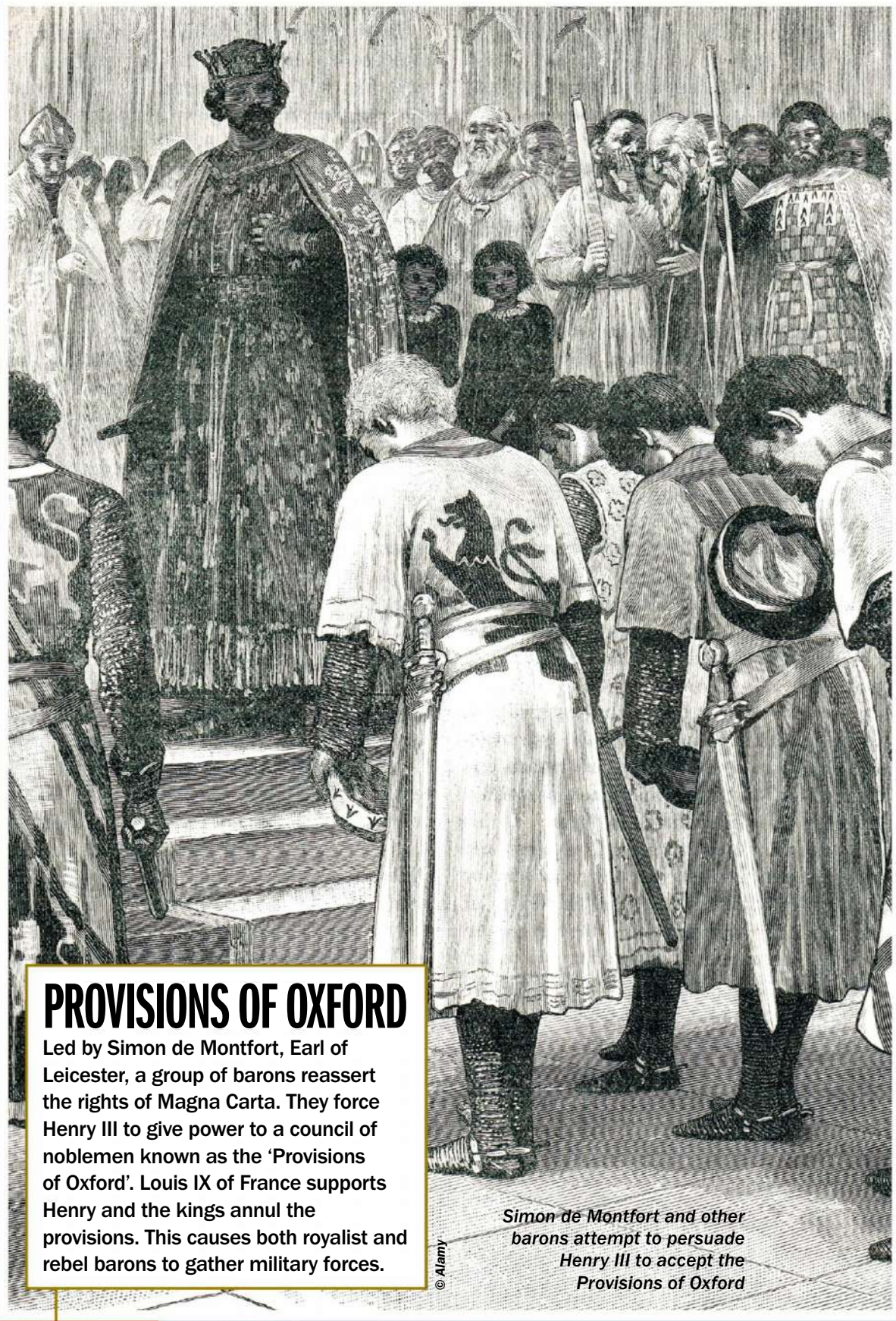

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Simon de Montfort and other barons attempt to persuade Henry III to accept the Provisions of Oxford

PROVISIONS OF OXFORD

Led by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, a group of barons reassert the rights of Magna Carta. They force Henry III to give power to a council of noblemen known as the 'Provisions of Oxford'. Louis IX of France supports Henry and the kings annul the provisions. This causes both royalist and rebel barons to gather military forces.

SECOND BARONS' WAR

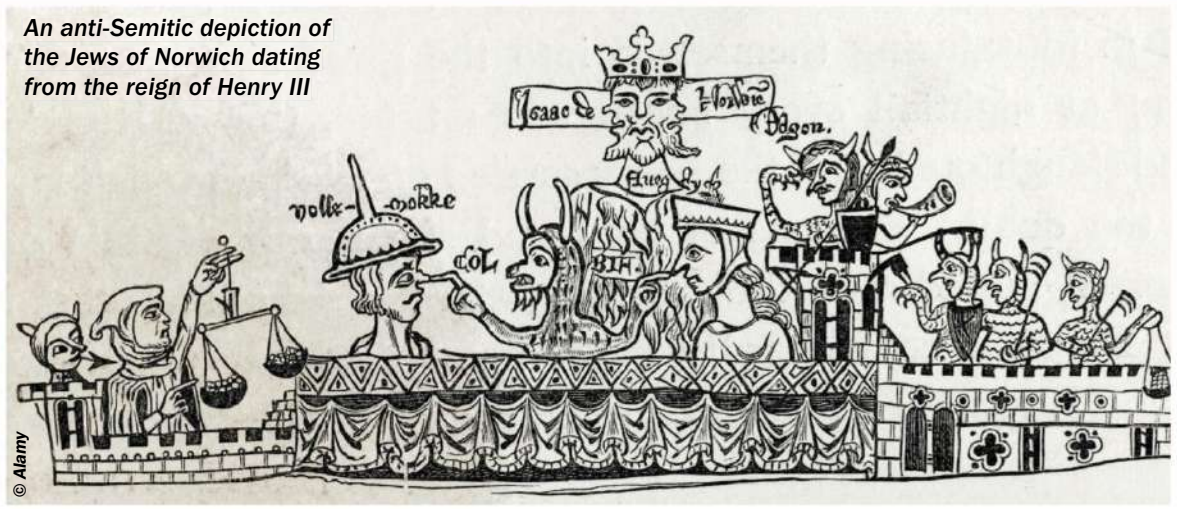
1258-64

1264-65

JEWISH POGROMS

Fighting breaks out between rebels and royalists. Montfort gains many supporters by promising to cancel debts owed to England's Jews. Attacks on Jewish communities ensue with bloody pogroms across the kingdom.

An anti-Semitic depiction of the Jews of Norwich dating from the reign of Henry III



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The parliament is held at the Palace of Westminster. The most substantial surviving structure from the 13th century period is Westminster Hall although its famous roof dates from the late 14th century

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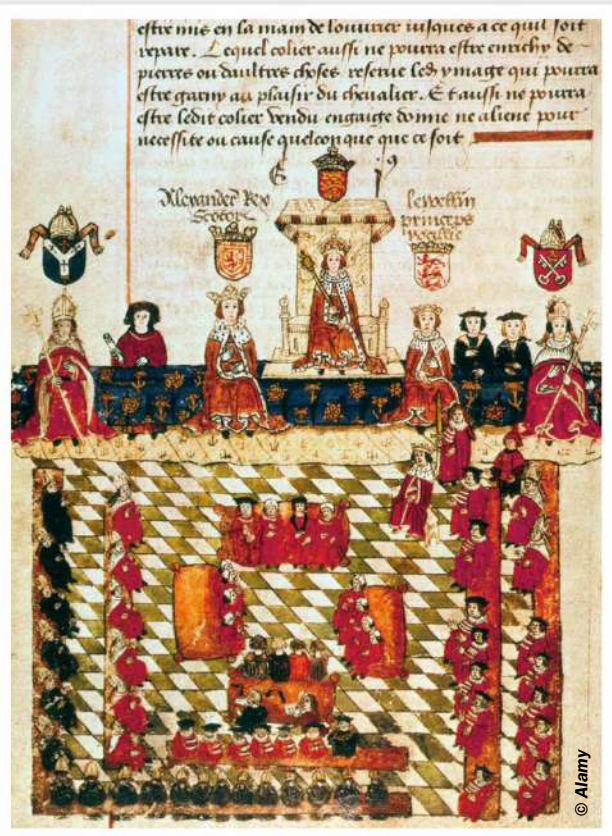
MONTFORT'S PARLIAMENT

Montfort effectively rules England and summons a radical parliament. It is the first to represent burgesses from cities and boroughs alongside knights to discuss matters of national concern as opposed to just granting taxation. This composition forms the basis of an embryo representative democracy and is central to the creation of the House of Commons.

DICTUMS AND STATUTES

Henry III issues the Dictum of Kenilworth which aims to reconcile his rebel barons. The Provisions of Oxford are repudiated but Magna Carta is reconfirmed. The dictum is then incorporated into law by the Statute of Marlborough.



Edward I presides over Parliament. The Statute of Marlborough is the oldest piece of statute law in the UK that has not been repealed with four of its 29 chapters still in force

© Alamy

© Alamy

A well dressing depicting the battle at the Crooked Spire of Chesterfield to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the engagement, 2016

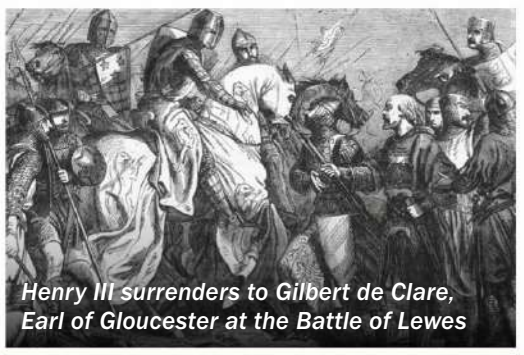
BATTLE OF CHESTERFIELD 08

The rebel baron Robert Ferrers, Earl of Derby, is defeated at a battle that is fought in and around the town of Chesterfield. Ferrers, who suffers from gout, is "taken ignobly" and taken to London "in irons" before he is imprisoned at Windsor.

14 May 1264 — January-March 1265 — 4 August 1265 — 15 May 1266 — 25 June-13 December 1266 — Autumn 1266-Summer 1267

BATTLE OF LEWES 06

Henry III and his heir Prince Edward (later Edward I) are defeated by Montfort. Edward initially leads a successful cavalry charge but an uphill infantry attack by Henry is beaten. The king is forced to accept the Provisions of Oxford while Edward is held hostage by the barons.



Henry III surrenders to Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester at the Battle of Lewes

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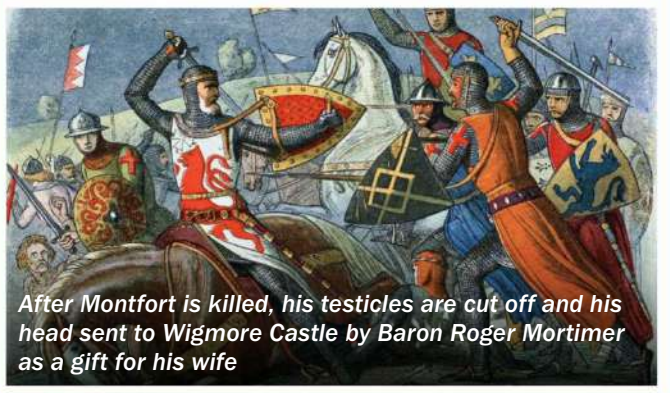
BATTLE OF EVESHAM 07

Prince Edward escapes captivity and restarts campaigning against baronial forces. He lures Montfort's outnumbered army into a trap at Evesham and the royalists win the battle. Montfort is killed and his body is heavily mutilated while Henry III is rescued from the rebel barons on the battlefield.



After Montfort is killed, his testicles are cut off and his head sent to Wigmore Castle by Baron Roger Mortimer as a gift for his wife

© Alamy

SIEGE OF KENILWORTH 09

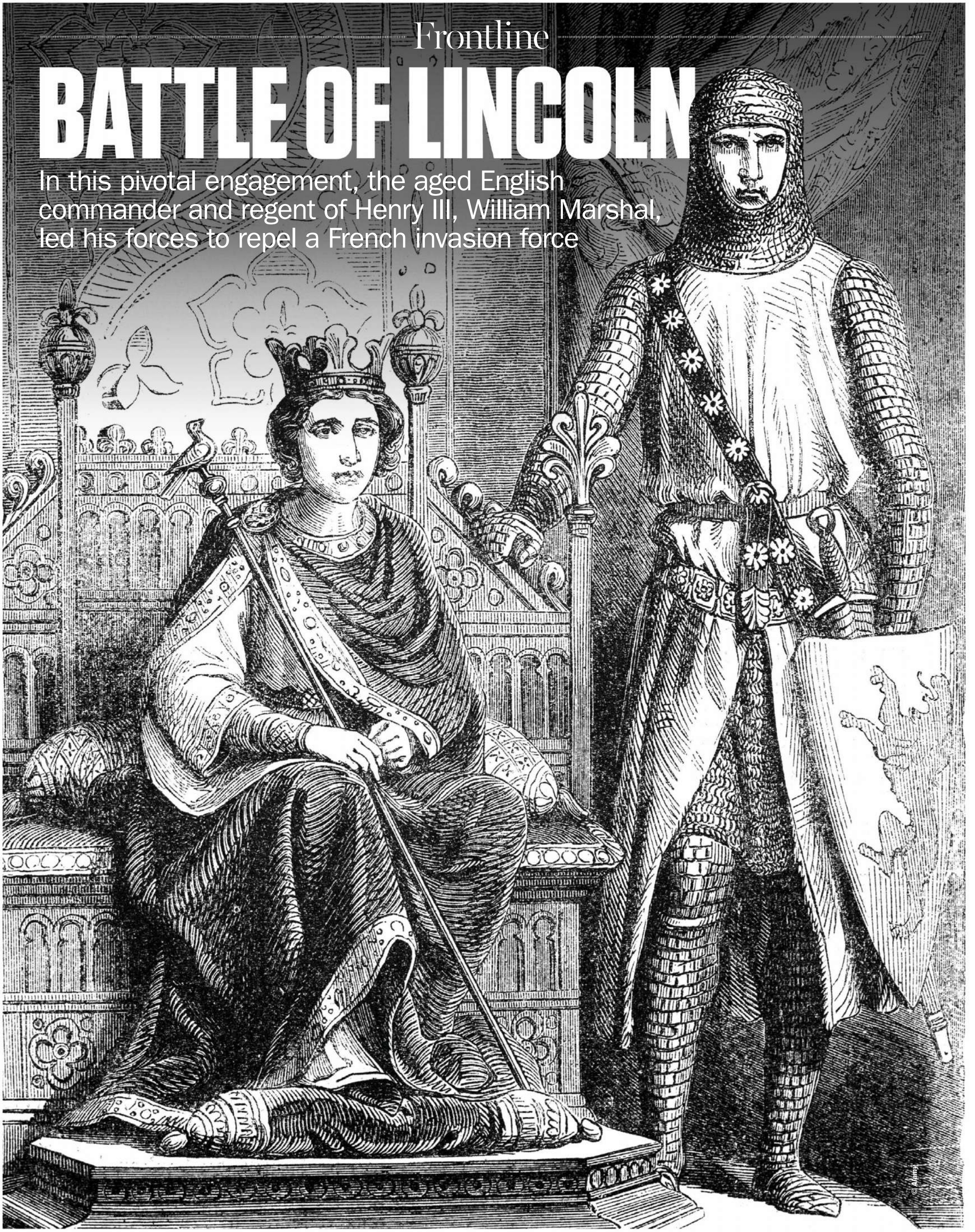
The last of Montfort's supporters defend their remaining stronghold. One of the mightiest fortresses in the kingdom, Kenilworth's garrison refuses to surrender. The rebels throw back Henry III's forces using siege engines and formidable water defences. Starvation and disease eventually forces the castle to surrender after 172 days.

Kenilworth Castle at its architectural zenith, c.1575. In 1266, the besiegers can't overcome the fortress's huge man-made lake (known as the 'Mere') and King John's perimeter walls

© Alamy

BATTLE OF LINCOLN

In this pivotal engagement, the aged English commander and regent of Henry III, William Marshal, led his forces to repel a French invasion force



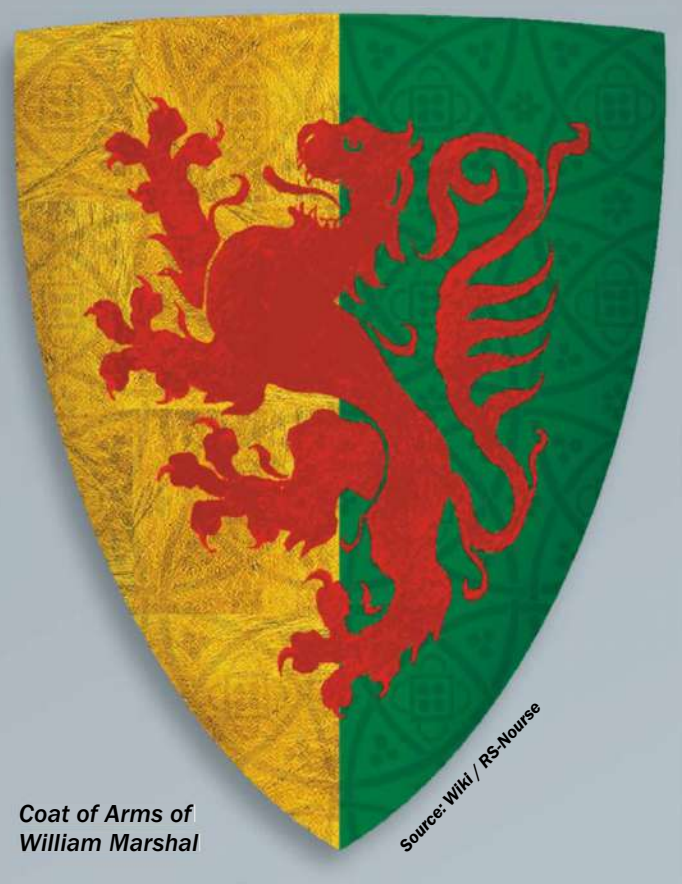
On 19 October 1216, King John died, leaving behind his son and successor, Henry III, who was only nine years old. The warrior-knight William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, was appointed Regent of the Kingdom. At the time, Marshal was around 70 years old. He was an aristocrat of rank and substance, a man famed for his chivalry, who had honed his political and military talent in service to Henry II and Richard the Lionheart. However, he had begun his career more modestly, as a penniless younger son of a minor nobleman, winning fame and fortune on the tournament circuit. Marshal was six foot tall, a man of considerable physical strength, skilled in horsemanship and the use of a variety of weapons. And he was a natural leader of men, as well versed in sheer cunning as chivalrous gestures. All these qualities would soon be put to the test.

William Marshal's position was a difficult one, because the rebels were in a dominating position. The royalists held a number of beleaguered castles, including Dover and Lincoln, and set up their regime in the southwest, at Gloucester and Bristol. But they were short of men and money. As Regent, Marshal pursued a conciliatory policy, ratifying a revised version of the Magna Carta on behalf of the infant king, and thereby making a break from the troubled legacy of King John. It was an astute move and by the spring of 1217 he had won over a number of rebels to his side.

In turn, Prince Louis brought in more troops from France. He then divided his forces, taking command of the besieging army outside Dover Castle and sending another under his lieutenant, Thomas Count of Perche, to Lincoln, where the rebels occupied most of the city and were now bombarding the castle (held by the redoubtable Nicola de la Haye). It was an over-ambitious strategy. William Marshal now saw an opportunity. He resolved to bring the rebel force at Lincoln to battle.

The Regent would be attacking with the smaller army and if he lost, the royalist cause would perish. But the chance was there – and he gathered his men at Newark-on-Trent, some 20 miles southwest of Lincoln, on 19 May 1217. His army consisted of around 400 knights, 300 crossbowmen and a mix of infantry. Marshal exhorted his captains to fight, "To defend our land and win for ourselves the highest honour." He rounded on the French contingent among the rebels, warning his troops that they only wished "to take for themselves the lands of our men". It was crowd-pleasing stuff.

The Papal Legate, Guala of Bichierri, had granted the royalists remission of their sins and the right to bear the cross of crusaders, and – in words recorded by Marshal's contemporary biographer – the Regent then made a deliberate reference to the army's sanctified status, "Let us make sure there is no coward amongst us," he declared, "for it is God's wish that we defend ourselves."



Coat of Arms of William Marshal

Source: Wiki / RS-Nourse

However, religious sentiment was only part of the story. William Marshal's supporter Fulkes de Breauté was a tough soldier who had won a fearsome reputation in service to King John on the Welsh Marches. But he was no friend of the church, prepared to destroy the Abbey of Strata Florida in 1212 for its opposition to the king, and early in 1217 ransacking the Abbey of St Albans, after the town came to an agreement with Prince Louis. All depended on the battle plan. Marshal's final words were telling, "The road that lies ahead must be freed with blades of iron. Nobody should hold back."

Medieval Lincoln's castle and cathedral lay to the north of the city, on high ground overlooking the River Witham. The rest of the settlement lay at the foot of the hill. The incline was steep: 175 feet from the lower town to the castle. The direct approach from Newark to Lincoln was along the Fosse Way. But it would mean crossing the Witham in full view of the enemy, whose strength was larger than Marshal's (some 600 knights and a large force of infantry). He would then have to fight up-hill.

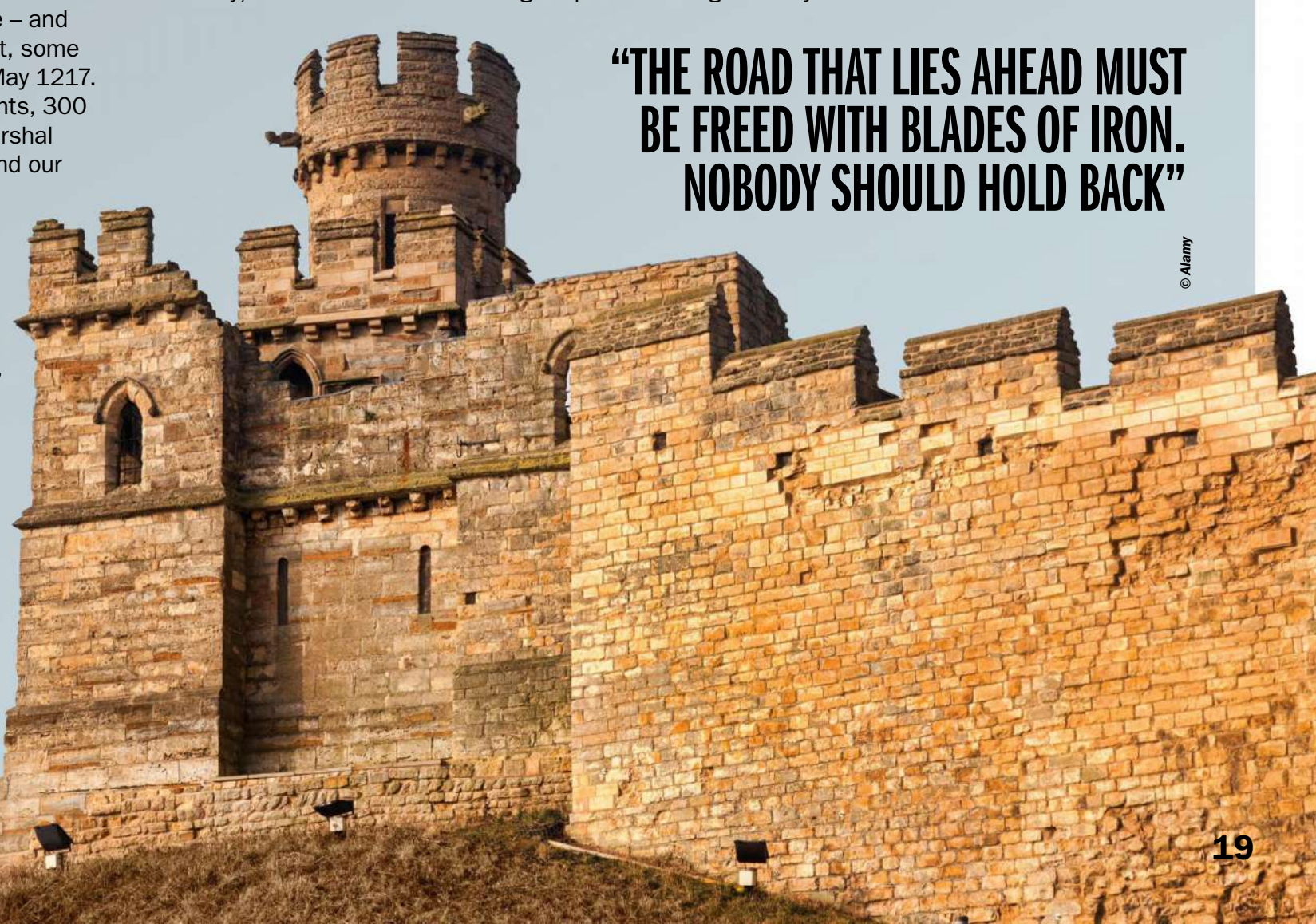
Instead, William Marshal took a more circuitous route, following the River Trent and camping at Torksey, ten miles northwest of Lincoln. He advanced upon the city at dawn on 20 May 1217 – from the north. He also employed a trick, instructing servants and non-combatants to carry banners so that in the dim light his army appeared larger than it was. The rebels, uncertain whether to offer battle outside the city walls, stayed behind the ramparts.

Royalist reconnaissance revealed one of the smaller gates, in the northwest section of the walls, had only been partially blocked by masonry. First, William Marshal got Fulkes de Breauté and the crossbowmen through the west gate of the castle, where they could fire upon the enemy, and engineered a diversionary attack by Ranulf earl of Chester on the city's northern gate. Then his men set about clearing the rubble. The entrance was opened before his opponents realised what was happening.

William Marshal moved forward with such eagerness that he almost forgot to take his helmet. His men burst upon the unsuspecting rebels. The count of Perche attempted to rally his troops in the cathedral grounds, but was felled by a sword blow through his visor. In support of the attack, De Breauté charged out of the castle with such impetus that he was briefly surrounded by his opponents, before his soldiers rushed in and rescued him. In the hand-to-hand fighting, Marshal dealt a powerful blow to one of his foes, forcing him to take shelter in a nearby house, unable to continue the fight. The rebels were then pushed down the hill and the battle had turned into a rout.

Royalist troops were allowed to loot the town – and so much plunder was gathered that the victory was nicknamed 'the battle of Lincoln Fair'. It was a turning point, forcing Prince Louis to lift the siege of Dover castle and pull back to London. But support was ebbing away and after a naval defeat at Sandwich, on 24 August 1217, he sued for peace. It was William Marshal's finest hour – and he would die two years later with his reputation as 'the greatest knight' firmly intact.

"THE ROAD THAT LIES AHEAD MUST BE FREED WITH BLADES OF IRON. NOBODY SHOULD HOLD BACK"



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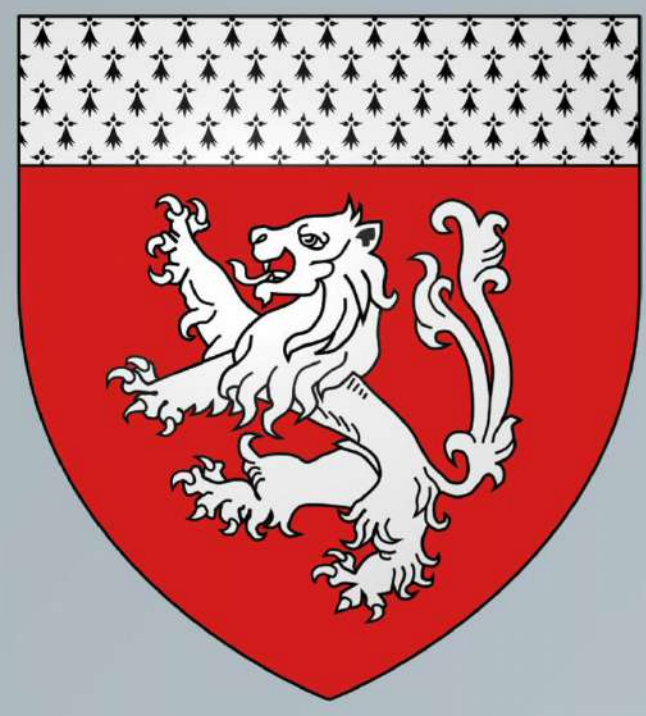
***Right:** Lincoln Castle was built in the 11th century by William the Conqueror on the site of existing Roman fortifications*

WHY DID SIMON DE MONTFORT FIGHT AT EVESHAM?

Rebel leader De Monfort had an opportunity to retreat from battle, instead he chose to fight on



Source: Wiki / Ray9

In 1264, nearly 50 years after the Magna Carta, the Second Barons' War broke out. It was provoked by a breakdown in trust between Henry III and a group of his leading barons. As with the first civil war, it was fought over the importance of upholding the Great Charter and maintaining good government. The leader of the rebels was Simon de Montfort.

Simon de Montfort was a charismatic figure. The son of a crusader, he was a skilful military commander, deeply religious and highly principled. He was a Frenchman who sometimes misjudged English sensibilities, and could appear aloof and arrogant. Initially he got on well with Henry III and was handsomely rewarded, marrying the king's sister Eleanor and receiving the earldom of Leicester. But then their relationship deteriorated. Simon came to regard Henry as untrustworthy, and over time lost all respect for him; Henry feared Simon's political ambitions. The war which began in 1264 was a matter of constitutional rights but also the fruit of a bitter personal enmity.

On 14 May 1264 De Montfort and his supporters won a resounding victory at Lewes, capturing Henry III and his son Prince Edward. The battle bore similarities to Lincoln. In both the smaller army triumphed through a mixture of crusading idealism, sound battle tactics and remarkable personal courage. Lewes made De Montfort in effect uncrowned king of England and in January 1265 he summoned an assembly sometimes known as the first Parliament (the inclusion of town representatives and knights of the shire laid the foundations for the House of Commons). The Magna Carta was once more ratified.

However, by the summer of 1265 things were going badly wrong for De Montfort. He used his powerful position to shower favours upon his own family, which cost him political support. He fell out with the powerful marcher nobleman Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, his principal supporter at Lewes, and then Prince Edward escaped from captivity and began raising an army to challenge his authority. Edward was vigorous and capable and De Montfort, who still held custody of the king, was outmanoeuvred by the newly formed royalist party. He formed a military alliance with Prince Llywelyn in an attempt to retrieve the situation, but spent too long in Wales doing so. When Simon de Montfort finally crossed the River Severn and moved towards Evesham his tired army desperately needed reinforcement. But Prince Edward struck first.

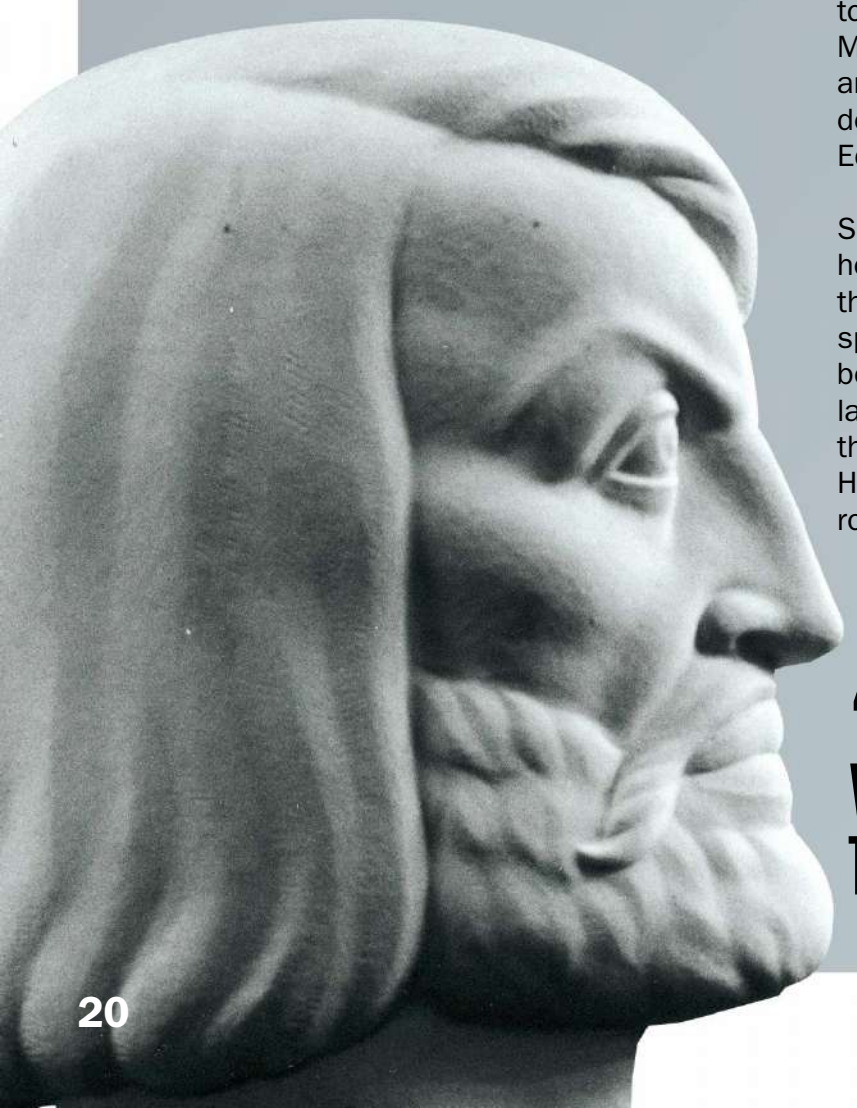
Learning that De Montfort's son, also named Simon, was at Kenilworth with fresh troops, he undertook a night march to intercept them. Inexcusably Simon and his men were spending the night in the town rather than behind the shelter of the castle walls. Edward launched a sudden, dawn attack, and routed the majority of Simon the Younger's forces. He then returned to block Simon de Monfort's route north out of Evesham. On the morning of 4 August he drew up his troops across the Alcester road. Prince Edward outnumbered his foe by at least 3:1 and was not prepared to show him any mercy. He had resolved to destroy De Montfort's army and kill its leader.

In the desperate clash which followed, Simon de Montfort – deserted by his Welsh infantry – rode out to meet Edward with only a small body of mounted followers. It was less a battle than a rout. De Montfort and his closest companions were all slain, and his catastrophic defeat effectively finished the Second Barons' War, although fighting was not formally concluded until the siege and capture of Kenilworth in 1267.

Simon de Montfort's position at Evesham was so desperate historians had assumed that he had no choice but to fight – and the escape route, over the bridge across the Avon west of the town, was blocked by a contingent from Prince Edward's army. Then a new, contemporary source was discovered. It revealed that on the morning of the battle the bridge was still open. Simon could have retreated, joined with the residue of his son's forces, and lived to fight another day.

It is hard to understand why he did not, particularly as the new source – reliable in its content and detail – reveals that his principal captains told him their small army was in no condition to fight. Some have suggested a chivalric explanation, that he felt honour-bound to confront his opponents; others a religious one, that he was seeking a form of martyrdom, to die in combat as his father had done. It could have simply been that fatigue, and sheer exasperation with his son, clouded his judgment. Whatever the explanation – and the debate over his motives will surely continue – one thing is clear: this was a battle that Simon de Montfort should never have fought.

Source: Wiki / Architect of the Capitol



***Left:** Bas-relief representing Simon de Montfort in the House of Representatives of the United States*

"PRINCE EDWARD OUTNUMBERED HIS FOE BY AT LEAST 3:1 AND WAS NOT PREPARED TO SHOW HIM ANY MERCY. HE HAD RESOLVED TO DESTROY DE MONTFORT'S ARMY AND KILL ITS LEADER"

The Battle of Evesham, 4 August 1265

©Alamy

Frontline

Q&A

Historian John Sadler describes the fighting conditions of soldiers during the Barons' Wars and the conflicts' impact on the evolution of democratic government

In some respects, the Barons' Wars were conventionally fought. Commanded by noblemen with an emphasis on cavalry and support by large numbers of foot soldiers, the wars were conducted over a series of battles and sieges. Nevertheless, at their heart was a radical question over how England should be governed that redefined the nature of government. John Sadler reveals how these 13th century wars were fought and their enduring political legacy.

To what extent did military technology develop between the First and Second Barons' Wars?
Technological and tactical innovation didn't shift that much in the gap between the two outbreaks of Barons' Wars. In the mid-13th century the bulk of fighting in the field was undertaken by mailed and mounted knights who were the arbiters of chivalric combat. It was Edward I who introduced the idea of an all-arms battle using cavalry, archers and infantry to deliver sustained missile shooting and planned assaults at the Battle of Falkirk in 1298. William Marshal would have seen little difference between the men who fought at Lincoln or Evesham.

Which armies were the most formidable out of the royalist and baronial forces?
Simon de Montfort the Elder, on perceiving Prince Edward's royalists deploying before the Battle of Evesham, is famously said to have remarked, "By the arm of St James, they have not learned that for themselves, but were taught it by me! May God have mercy on our souls, for our bodies are theirs." He wasn't wrong.

In the Evesham campaign of 1265, Prince Edward faced two baronial armies; that of the older Simon which lay west of the Severn and that of his son which was before Pevensey. Edward moved at speed, pinning his westerly opponents back behind the formidable river barrier and burning the bridges. Gloucester was secured and a rebel fleet at anchor in Bristol dealt with. De Montfort the younger was hurrying westwards to his father's relief, advancing as far as Kenilworth.

The prince, then at Worcester, who was well placed to strike a blow at either of his foes, assaulted the rebel quarters at Kenilworth in a classic dawn raid, before turning back for the decisive encounter at Evesham. It is suggested that commanders of this era lacked strategic flair but Edward's campaign indicates otherwise. In short, there were few differences between the forces deployed. It was superior generalship that made the difference, although De Montfort was further hamstrung at Evesham in that his Welsh auxiliaries were unarmoured.

What was the fighting experience like for soldiers from mounted knights to common soldiers?
The *Holkham Bible*, which was produced sometime later in the early 14th century, contains a pair of very striking images arranged one above the other. The uppermost shows a scene of savage combat with mailed knights in a melee. The lower scene reveals infantry likewise engaged in a furious, if less gentlemanly, fracas with swords, bucklers, axes and the fearsome falchion much in evidence.

Such a colourful vision, which could come directly from the pen of Scott or Tennyson, is highly idealised. The reality would be rather more mundane. Knights would ride light horses – palfreys – on the march which saved their precious destriers for combat. The armies would proceed in a cacophony of noise and dust. Horses threw up vast clouds of muck with the foot soldiers tramping in long, straggling columns whilst being ill-fed, ill-accoutred and swallowing the laden dust of their betters.

How much did the English civilian population suffer during the wars?
This is very hard to determine as peasants weren't of much account and not a priority for chroniclers. There was not widespread devastation and certainly not the wholesale destruction of Stephen and Matilda's long Anarchy. Mercifully, both Barons' Wars were comparatively quite short in duration so civil life wasn't disrupted over a long period of time. However, Jews in England were particular targets for both sides.

Is it feasible that Simon de Montfort could have won the Second Barons' War and how would England have changed if he had?
It is certainly not impossible that De Montfort could have won the deciding round as he had, by good generalship, won the first. But the magnates were not ready (as was the case later during the early phases of the Wars of the Roses) to countenance actual regime change. He would have to have ruled through the person of the king and Warwick the Kingmaker could have told him how dangerous that was!

***Below:** Peers and commoners fight in a scene from the* **Holkham Bible**. *Produced by an unidentified Dominican friar, the book is a valuable visual source on Medieval English society*

"IT IS SUGGESTED THAT COMMANDERS OF THIS ERA LACKED STRATEGIC FLAIR BUT EDWARD'S CAMPAIGN INDICATES OTHERWISE"

John Sadler is the author of* The Second Barons' War: Simon De Montfort And The Battles Of Lewes And Evesham, *which is published by Pen & Sword Books. To purchase a copy visit: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

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LEADERS & COMMANDERS

From King John to Simon de Montfort, thes are some of the key figures of the Barons' Wars

KING JOHN
A ROYAL FAILURE
1166, REIGNED 1199-1216

King John, the youngest son of Henry II, was a disaster as king. Between 1199 and 1204 he lost the duchy of Normandy and most of his French lands to Philip Augustus, causing the collapse of the Angevin Empire. He had a flair for administrative reform and was energetic in some aspects of domestic government, but these policies were marred by financial exactions and vindictiveness towards his aristocratic subjects. His cruelty and the increasing harshness of his rule alienated many of his nobles and led to the Magna Carta being sealed at Runnymede in June 1215. It was an attempt to restrain the worst excesses of royal government. When John subsequently refused to abide by its provisions the Barons' Wars began.

King John of England (1166-1216) was also known as 'John Lackland'

© Alamy

SIMON DE MONTFORT
THE GREAT REFORMER
CIRCA 1208-1265

De Monfort commanded respect for his belief in good government and his sense of chivalry

Simon de Montfort, the son of a crusader, was an inspiring but controversial figure in 13th century England. He was an intelligent and deeply pious man, a charismatic leader who commanded respect among his peers for his sense of chivalry and belief in good government. But he was also a foreigner who never fully understood English customs and sensibilities – a man who won great loyalty but who could also be aloof and arrogant. He married Henry III's sister Eleanor and received the earldom of Leicester, but became increasingly alienated from the king. By 1258 he was leading the opposition to royal policy, which six years later resulted in the Second Barons' War. The battle of Lewes on 14 May 1264 was Simon's most remarkable achievement: a victory founded on fervent idealism and astonishing courage. In January 1265, ruling England on behalf of a captive Henry III, he summoned an assembly which is sometimes seen as England's first Parliament. A dramatic collapse of support in the summer of 1265 saw his defeat and death at Evesham on 4 August 1265 – a battle he could and should have avoided.

Source: Wiki / NYPL

EDWARD I
ENGLAND'S LION
1239, REIGNED 1272-1307

Edward I would become one of England's great Medieval kings, subduing Wales with a chain of imposing castles and, for a time, coming close to defeating Scotland as well. He could be cruel and ruthless, but was a determined ruler with a strong and clear vision of kingship. As heir to the throne his martial prowess was already evident. He could be impulsive – at the battle of Lewes, an over-hasty charge threw the whole royal battle line out of alignment – but a year later, in 1265, he proved a formidable opponent to Simon de Montfort, outmanoeuvring and defeating him at Evesham.

Edward I was crowned at Westminster by Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury

© Alamy

WILLIAM MARSHAL
ARGUABLY ENGLAND'S GREATEST KNIGHT
CIRCA 1147-1219

A younger son and knight adventurer, William Marshal became earl of Pembroke and, in 1216, regent of England on behalf of King John's son, the nine-year-old Henry III. He was the subject of a near-contemporary biography (the work was commissioned by his son and completed in 1226) and his fellow nobles were fascinated by his courage, knightly prowess and chivalry. He grew in political prominence during the reign of Henry II, visited the Holy Land and stayed loyal to the king during the rebellion of his sons. When he met the future Richard the Lionheart in combat he unhorsed his opponent but pointedly spared his life. In return, when Richard came to the throne he rewarded Marshal with lands and offices. William Marshal's command of the royalist army at the battle of Lincoln in 1217 was his crowning achievement – a stunning victory which cemented his reputation as 'the greatest knight'.

William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke, was an Anglo-Norman soldier and statesman

© Alamy

HENRY III
A CULTURED WEAKLING
1207, REIGNED 1216-1272

Henry III was a cultivated king and a great patron of the arts. But he was an indecisive ruler, too much under the sway of foreign favourites and vacillating and untrustworthy in matters of government. His foreign policy was full of grandiose schemes which imposed crippling financial burdens on his kingdom. He was no warrior and his breach with Simon de Montfort irreparably tarnished his reign. By 1258 frustrated nobles, led by Simon, were trying to restrain Henry by a council of aristocrats (set out in the Provisions of Oxford). In 1264 the Second Barons' War began and Henry III was captured by Simon de Montfort at Lewes. His fortunes were retrieved by the courage and skill of his son Prince Edward, who defeated De Montfort at Evesham a year later, showing the resilience and determination his father sadly lacked.

Henry III of England was captured by Simon de Montfort at Lewes

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© Nicholas Forder

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

From ancient ships powered only by human strength and endurance, to the destructive modern craft decked with guns, aircraft and heavy guns, we take a look at the most important and devastating vessels in maritime history

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

WARSHIPS IN THE AGE OF SAIL

From ancient times to the early modern era, navies relied on human strength and the elements, but were no less vital to the great global conflicts of their time

WORDS **MARC DESANTIS**

The warships of the world prior to the advent of steam power relied upon either the wind or on the muscles of oarsmen to power them forward. Within the relatively sheltered confines of the Mediterranean Sea, the war galley, propelled by banks of rowers, was the arbiter of naval battles during the ancient and medieval periods. The invasion of Greece by the Persians was halted by the Greek triumph at Salamis in 480 BCE, a fight between hundreds of trireme galleys on both sides. The trireme's larger derivative, the quinquereme, was the workhorse warship of both the Roman and Carthaginian fleets during the Punic Wars. Elsewhere, in East Asia, a rowed warship, the turtle ship, would help save Korea from Japanese conquest in the last decade of the 16th century.

The war galley would also dominate the naval wars of the Middle Ages, appearing in various guises in Mediterranean navies. The Byzantine dromon would be the ancestral model for Italian war galleys of the later Middles Ages. With the coming of bigger warships in the 16th century, such as the heavily armed carrack and the galleon, both carrying quantities of heavy cannons that the cramped galley could not match – its heyday was over.

Naval commanders subsequently struggled to find the right balance between manoeuvrability and firepower. This would be decided strongly in favour of the latter with the arrival of ships such as Sovereign Of The Seas, which was best used as a gun carrier among others of its type, to fire heavy broadsides at the enemy. The ship-of-the-line, able to stand in the line of battle and both absorb and dish out massive punishment, became the capital ship of European fleets by the late 17th century and would dominate the seas until the early 19th century.

GREEK TRIREME

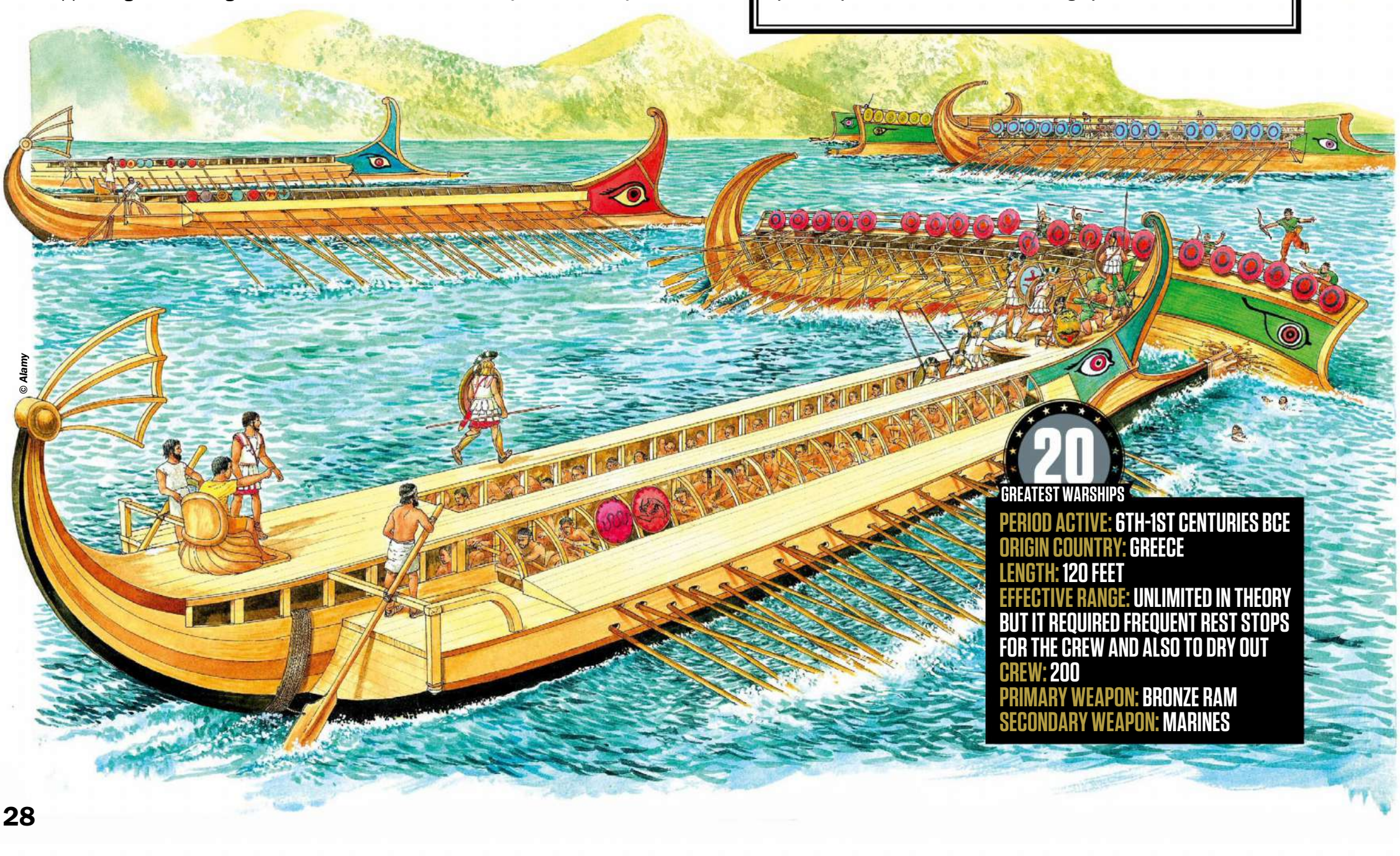
The warship of ancient Greece as well as that of her greatest enemy, the Persian Empire

The trireme (meaning 'three-oared') was a fast and sleek war galley, powered by 170 rowers in three banks, with each man pulling a single oar. The full crew of a trireme stood at 200. Apart from the rowers there were the sailors, the captain (known as the trierarc) ten marines and four archers. Built from light wood, the trireme could achieve sprint speeds of around ten knots per hour.

The trireme could be used in combat in two basic ways. She could be aimed at another trireme, where its bow-mounted ram could then crunch through the opponent's timbers, causing it to flood with seawater. The oarsmen would then 'back water' to extract the trireme from the breach. Once that was done, it could either ram the same ship again or go off in search of another target.

A trierarch could also order a boarding action in which the armed infantry would climb over to an enemy ship and fight for its possession. The Athenian Navy, supremely skilled at rowing, preferred to use their superior manoeuvrability to ram, and largely tried to avoid boarding.

The trireme did have some drawbacks. Her hull timbers soaked up water, and that made her slow, meaning each night the crew would have to drag the waterlogged ship onto a beach to allow her dry out to regain speed. The waters of the Mediterranean were also infested with floating shipworm larvae. These would insert themselves into the timbers and weaken them. Triremes had to be constantly inspected and coated with pitch to prevent the vessel from falling apart.



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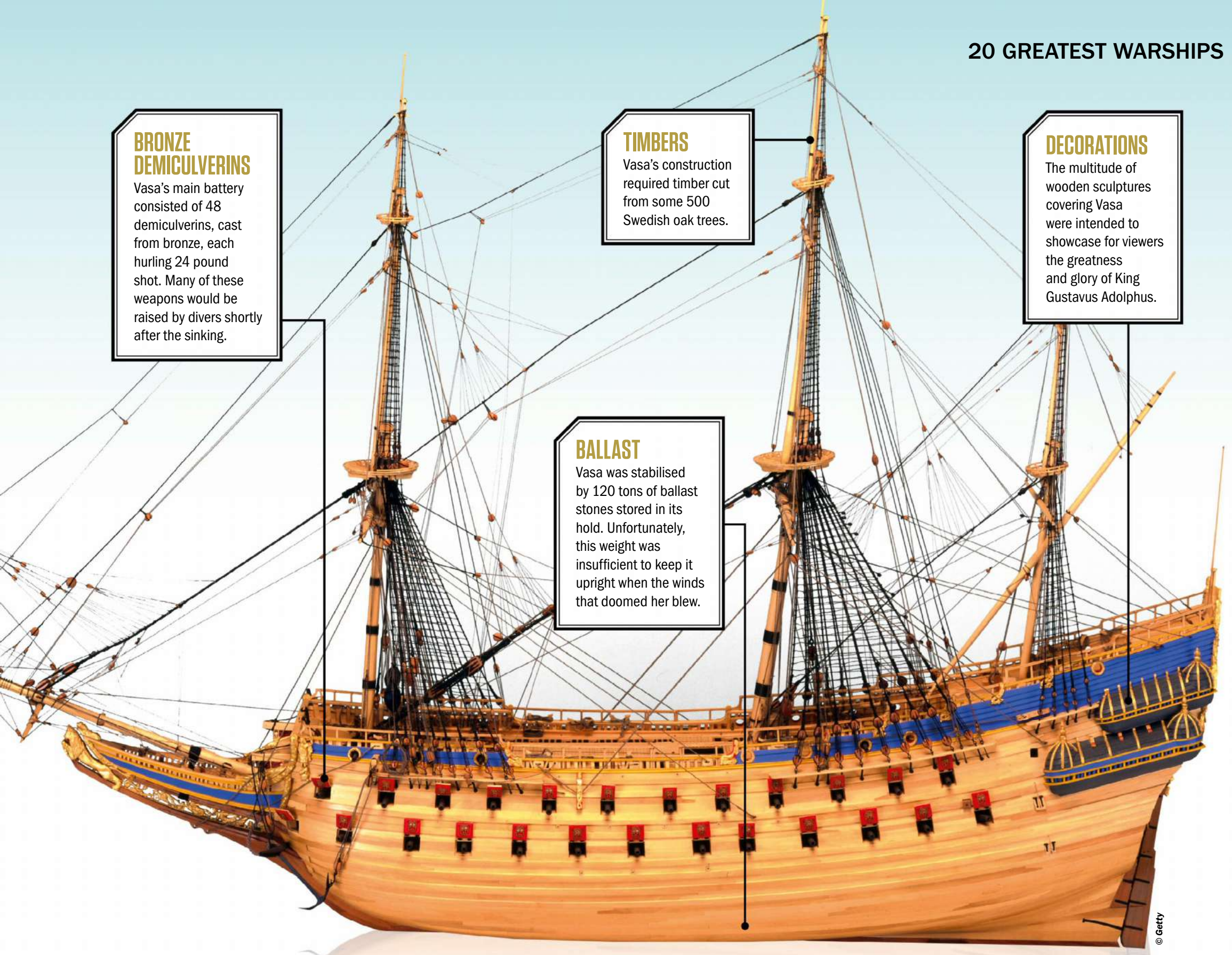
20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE: 6TH-1ST CENTURIES BCE
ORIGIN COUNTRY: GREECE
LENGTH: 120 FEET
EFFECTIVE RANGE: UNLIMITED IN THEORY BUT IT REQUIRED FREQUENT REST STOPS FOR THE CREW AND ALSO TO DRY OUT
CREW: 200
PRIMARY WEAPON: BRONZE RAM
SECONDARY WEAPON: MARINES



© Getty

VASA: SWEDEN'S GLORIOUS, TRAGIC WARSHIP

Built to help win control of the Baltic Sea by King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, Vasa was dangerously top-heavy, and sank under wind gusts on the day of her maiden voyage

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE: 1628
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: SWEDEN
LENGTH: 156 FEET
CREW: 445
EFFECTIVE RANGE: UNLIMITED
PRIMARY WEAPONS: 48 X 24-PDR BRONZE DEMICULVERINS
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 8 X BRONZE 3-PDR GUNS; 2 X 1-PDR GUNS; 6 X MORTARS

King Gustavus Adolphus was nicknamed 'The Lion of the North', and for good reason. A brilliant general, he would rescue the Protestant cause in Germany during the Thirty Years' War at the head of his efficient and skilled army.

It was also imperative for Gustavus that Sweden rule the Baltic Sea, and for that, he needed a bigger and better navy. In 1624, the king tasked two Dutch brothers, the experienced shipwrights Hendrik and Arendt Hybertszoon who operated the royal shipyard in Stockholm, to turn out new warships. One was soon taking shape on the building stocks, but the king then requested that Hendrik build an even larger vessel.

Seeking to please the king, who wanted the new ship built immediately, Hendrik placed additional frames into, and lengthened the keel of, the smaller vessel already in progress, rather than of restarting and following a fresh design. As a consequence, Vasa would turn out to be narrower than she ought to have been, just 38 feet in beam (width), and she drew a mere 15.5 feet of water. Taken together with her voluminous sails, vaulting sterncastle, and weighty cannons, she was very top-heavy, and thus dangerously unstable.

Vasa was to be an extraordinary warship, and certainly one that was, outwardly at least, fit for a king. The 1,210-ton, 156-foot vessel was topped by a canvas cloud of ten sails, set on three masts. Her armament was also impressively powerful, including a main battery of 48 bronze 24-pounder demiculverins. These were backed up by a substantial secondary battery of several lighter guns.

Tragedy would soon befall Vasa, even though there had been hints of an impending catastrophe. A stability test showed that she was unstable, but the result was ignored. The king wanted his ship, and would accept no delay.

On 10 August 1628, the day of its maiden voyage, Vasa was to make a short trip out of the harbour to nearby Vaxholm. Setting sail, it was rocked by wind gusts that caused her to roll so far to port (left) that water began to pour in through her gunports. It took on more and more water, defying all attempts to stabilise it. Before long, scarcely outside the harbour, it had disappeared beneath the waves. Around 30 people died in the unmitigated disaster.

At root, the ill-planned Vasa was too slender, and lacked sufficient ballast, to prevent her from calamitously heeling (leaning) in the wind. She would lie at the bottom for over 300 years, until she was raised in April 1961. She currently sits in the Vasa Museum in Stockholm.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE:
1580-1593
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION:
PORTUGAL/SPAIN
LENGTH:
180 FEET
EFFECTIVE RANGE:
UNLIMITED
PRIMARY WEAPON:
48 GUNPOWDER CANNONS

Source: Wiki / National Gallery of Art Washington DC

SPANISH GALLEON

Symbol of Spanish might, the galleon was at the forefront of Spain's naval campaigns and ably protected its seaborne trade

The galleon symbolises the vast Spanish Empire during its golden age in the 16th and 17th centuries. Sprawling over several continents, the empire was knitted together by hundreds of galleons, traversing the seas between the mother country and her colonial possessions.

The galleon appeared first in the early 16th century. A sail-driven craft, with its high sides, soaring sterncastle and many heavy guns, it possessed a marked advantage in battle over lower and lighter war galleys. Fleets of galleons were used to escort convoys both to and from the Americas.

The Spanish relied particularly on their excellent shipboard infantry to win naval fights. Galleons were nonetheless usually well-armed with cannons, typically carrying 30-40 bronze guns of varying sizes. Galleons formed the core of the Spanish fleet in the Armada campaign of 1588, including the Portuguese-built flagship, the Sao Martinho.

They were still in use at the Battle of the Downs against the Dutch in 1639. After this, the galleon was superseded by the earliest examples of the ship-of-the-line, which relied mainly on their own shipborne artillery when in combat and fought in lines of battle.

HENRI GRACE À DIEU: FLAGSHIP OF HENRY VIII

This formidable Tudor Carrack was a heavily-armed Renaissance leviathan, but saw little action on account of the great expense required to operate it

Originally intended to bear the name Henry Imperial, the massive, four-masted, 1,000-ton carrack instead entered King Henry VIII's 'Navy Royal' in June 1514 as the Henri Grace à Dieu. The ship's great size was matched by her tremendous cost, with over £8,700 devoted to her construction – a fortune in the period.

It became the flagship of the royal fleet, and its armament was appropriately heavy. Henri Grace à Dieu mounted 16 iron cannons, four bronze cannons, and two further cannons that fired only stone shot, not iron balls. Lesser weapons included six bronze 'falcons' (a lighter form of gun) and 22 additional stone-firing breech-loaders.

Rounding out Henri's armament were 126 swivel guns, used to spray and splatter hostile boarders with small missiles. Any attackers lucky enough to survive these would then have had to contend with the 700 crewmen, who were armed to the teeth with arquebuses, bows, bills and spears.

Despite its size and power, Henri Grace à Dieu saw rather little action. Though it would be rebuilt in 1539, it was very costly to operate, and so spent much of its time laid up to save money. Renamed Edward in 1547 upon the accession of Henry's son and successor, Edward VI, it was thereafter usually laid up at Woolwich. Its end came in August 1553, due not to enemy weaponry, but to an accidental fire that erupted after it was taken out of mothballs and readied for active service.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE: 1514-1553
ORIGIN COUNTRY: ENGLAND
LENGTH: 130 FEET
EFFECTIVE RANGE: UNLIMITED
CREW: 700
PRIMARY WEAPONS: 16 X IRON CANNONS; FOUR BRONZE CANNONS; 2 X STONE-FIRING CANNONS
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 6 X BRONZE 'FALCONS'; 22 X STONE-FIRING BREECH-LOADING GUNS; 126 SWIVEL GUNS

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TURTLE SHIP

The kobukson – the legendary Korean turtle ship – was a heavily armed and well-protected warship built from resurrected plans to resist the Japanese invasion of Korea

In the dark summer of 1592, Korean fortunes were bleak. The navy had performed abysmally when a massive Japanese invasion fleet had arrived off Pusan. With most Korean ships sunk in the opening days, and Japanese samurai rampaging ashore, there seemed little that could halt the conquest of Korea.

Yi Sun-sin, admiral of Korea's last remaining battlefleet, refused to give up. He mercilessly harried the marauding Japanese ships whose overconfident crews had turned to looting the countryside. At the forefront of his fightback was the kobukson, or 'turtle ship', for which Admiral Yi had found old plans and built.

The turtle ships were never numerous, but Yi relied on them to lead his fleet into battle. Where Japanese ships were high-sided and lumbering sailing vessels, suited for boarding actions, the turtle ship was a low and manoeuvrable oared warship, to which sails could be fitted, that carried heavy guns. More, it could also deliver a deadly ramming attack against an opponent.

The top was entirely covered over, conferring protection from Japanese arquebus fire. Its curved roof, adorned with tall spikes, gave the ship its name. The turtle ship could get in among the enemy ships and unleash terrible damage, shooting them up with cannonballs and enormous iron-tipped arrows. By late 1592, Admiral Yi, with the aid of the handful of turtle ships in his fleet, had defeated every Japanese fleet, cut the Japanese supply lines, and stopped the invasion cold after winning the decisive Battle of Hansando.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE: 1592-1598
ORIGIN COUNTRY: KOREA
LENGTH: 120 FEET
EFFECTIVE RANGE: UNLIMITED
CREW: 130
PRIMARY WEAPON: 22 CANNONS
SECONDARY WEAPON: RAMMING ATTACK
ARMOUR: HEAVY WOODEN TIMBERS

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20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

REVOLUTIONARY & NAPOLEONIC

Great warships of the 18th and 19th centuries established traditions that later defined the world's most powerful navies, and gave rise to the reputations of legendary seafarers

WORDS **MICHAEL HASKEW**

Naval power enabled nations to build, develop and defend empires, projecting military might across the globe during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. The fates of nations rested on the outcomes of great battles, and naval heroes set standards of dedication and conduct while serving on their decks. Early warship types gave way to swift, heavily armed frigates and majestic but menacing ships-of-the-line, mounting 100 or more guns. Nations, both preeminent and emerging, recognised naval might as the front line of deterrence and defence against invasion, as well as a source of tremendous prestige. Warship construction, seamanship, gunnery and firepower were substantially improved and increased in an era of global competition and expansion among the European powers. At the same time, former colonies asserted their own brand of nationalism on the high seas, and barbarous pirates plied their nefarious craft aboard warships that could take on almost any attempt to defend or apprehend these rogues of the seas. Warships of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods shaped the course of history, and the victors established new strategies and tactics that dominated the world's oceans for years to come.

The United States Navy frigate Constitution, the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat, ploughs ahead under full sail

© Alamy

USS CONSTITUTION

Nicknamed 'Old Ironsides', the USS Constitution established the US Navy as a global power following significant victories during the War of 1812

Authorised for construction by the US Congress with the Naval Act of 1794, USS Constitution was one of six heavy frigates that formed the core of the fledgling United States Navy. Constitution remains in active service today, the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat. Constitution welcomes thousands of visitors annually as a naval museum at the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston, Massachusetts.

Constructed in the Edmund Hartt shipyard in Boston's North End, Constitution was launched in October 1797 and commissioned on 22 July 1798. Although officially carrying 44 guns, the frigate sometimes mounted more than 50. During its early career, Constitution protected American merchant shipping during a dispute with France and fought the Barbary pirates along the coast of North Africa.

During the War of 1812, Constitution earned lasting fame, defeating five British warships, the frigates Guerriere and Java, the schooner Pictou, and the sloops Cyane and Levant. During the battle with Guerriere, the British frigate's shot appeared to bounce harmlessly off the sturdy oak hull of Constitution, and a sailor remarked, "Huzzah! Her sides are made of iron!" Since then, Constitution has also been known as 'Old Ironsides'. More than two centuries after commissioning, USS Constitution remains an icon of the United States Navy.

"USS CONSTITUTION WAS ONE OF SIX HEAVY FRIGATES THAT FORMED THE CORE OF THE FLEDGLING UNITED STATES NAVY"

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED: 1798
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
LENGTH: 93 METRES (305 FEET)
EFFECTIVE RANGE: MONTHS AT SEA; REPLENISHED IN VARIOUS PORTS
CREW: 450
PRIMARY WEAPON: 24X 32-POUND CARRONADES
SECONDARY WEAPON: 30X 24-POUND CANNON; 1X 18-POUND BOW CHASER

HMS VICTORY

This ship stands tall in British Royal Navy tradition, symbolic of the courage of Admiral Horatio Nelson at Trafalgar

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED: 1778
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: BRITAIN
LENGTH: 69.34 METRES (227 FEET, 6 INCHES)
EFFECTIVE RANGE: MONTHS AT SEA; REPLENISHED IN VARIOUS PORTS
CREW: 850
PRIMARY WEAPONS: 104 GUNS; 30 X 32-POUNDER
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 28 X 24-POUNDER; 42 X SHORT 12-POUNDER; 2 X MEDIUM 12-POUNDER; 2 X 68-POUNDER CARRONADE

With more than 240 years of continuous service, HMS Victory is the oldest active warship still in commission in the world. This first-rate ship-of-the-line, ordered in 1758 as one of a dozen new warships for the British Royal Navy, was laid down the following year, launched in 1765 and commissioned in 1778. Since 1922, HMS Victory has resided in drydock in Portsmouth, England, as a museum ship.

Although the preservation of HMS Victory evolved over many years, some spent languishing in decay and decline, the great warship's service to the British Empire continued to resonate with its people. The old warrior has come to embody the fighting spirit of the Royal Navy, even against difficult odds, and remains a symbol of national pride.

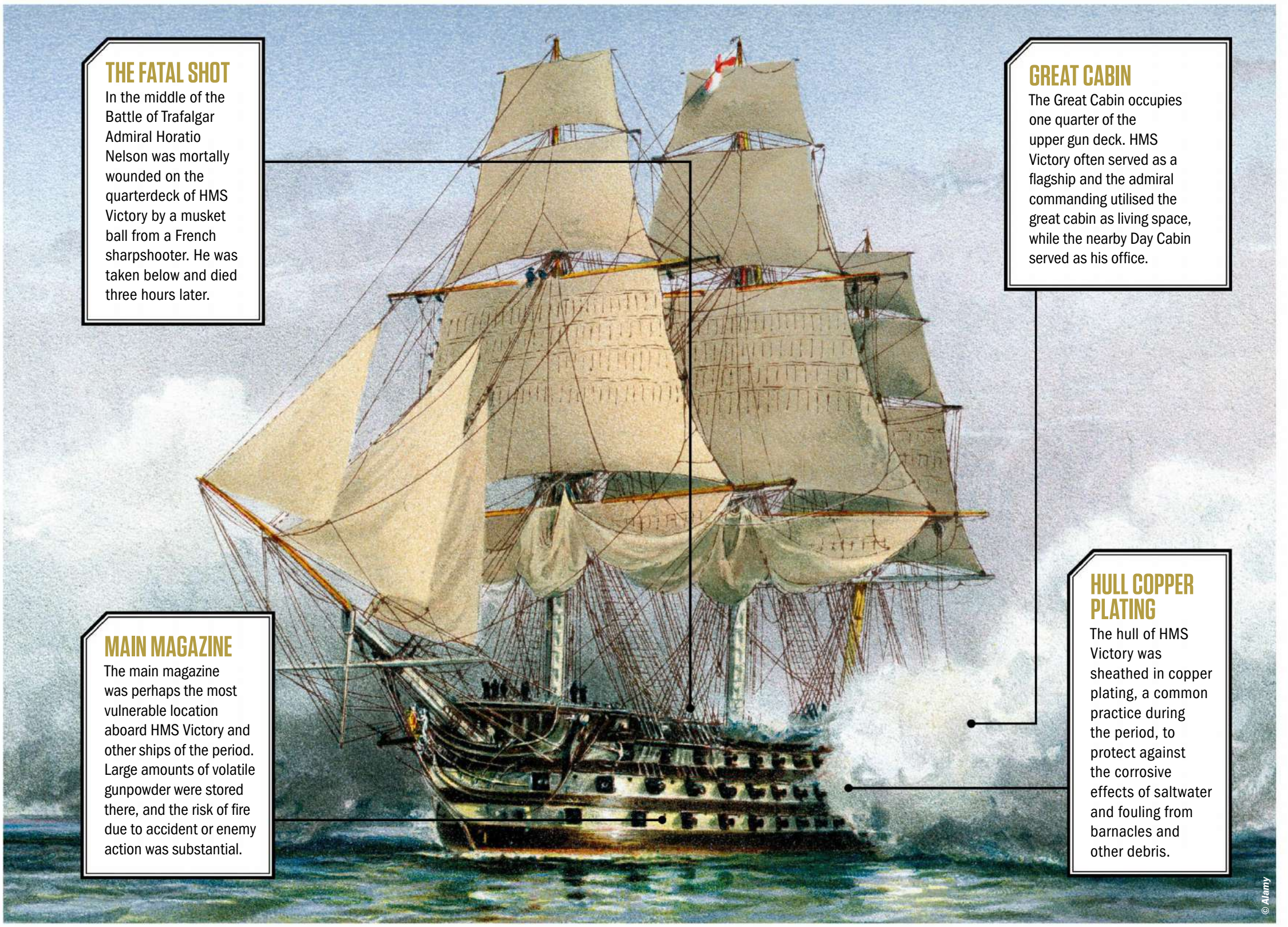
During its long career in service, HMS Victory was present at the First and Second Battles of Ushant in 1778 and 1780, the siege of Gibraltar in 1782, and the 1797 Battle of Cape St Vincent. However, its greatest service was rendered during the pivotal Battle of Trafalgar, fought 21 October 1805 against a combined French and Spanish fleet during the War of the Third Coalition. Flying the flag of Admiral Horatio Nelson, Victory led the 27-ship Royal Navy Squadron to triumph over 33 opposing warships off the coast of Cadiz in southwest Spain.

From the decks of Victory, Nelson sent the famed signal to his command, "England expects that every man will do his duty." Nelson sailed Victory into the teeth of the enemy, engaging as many as four adversaries at any given time. Victory duelled with the 74-gun Redoutable, the two warships locking masts in deadly embrace. Moments later, a sharpshooter's ball fired from the French vessel's mizzenmast struck Nelson, who fell mortally wounded. He died three hours later aboard HMS Victory, at the moment of supreme triumph.

Heavily damaged and under tow by HMS Neptune, the battered flagship reached Gibraltar for repairs and carried the body of the fallen hero of Trafalgar back to England. At first, the Admiralty considered HMS Victory too old and damaged for a return to service as a first-rate warship, and it was relegated to second-rate. Major repairs began in 1814, and Victory served later as a troop and prison ship. A public outcry saved the great ship from being broken up in 1831, but still Victory laid derelict and its condition continued to deteriorate.

Renewed preservation efforts in the early 20th century again saved HMS Victory, and extensive restoration led to permanent display at Portsmouth, where the grand warship serves today as the flagship of the First Sea Lord. As a symbol of Royal Navy and national pride, HMS Victory receives 350,000 visitors annually.

HMS Victory, a first-rate Royal Navy ship-of-the-line, fires a broadside at Trafalgar while serving as Admiral Nelson's flagship



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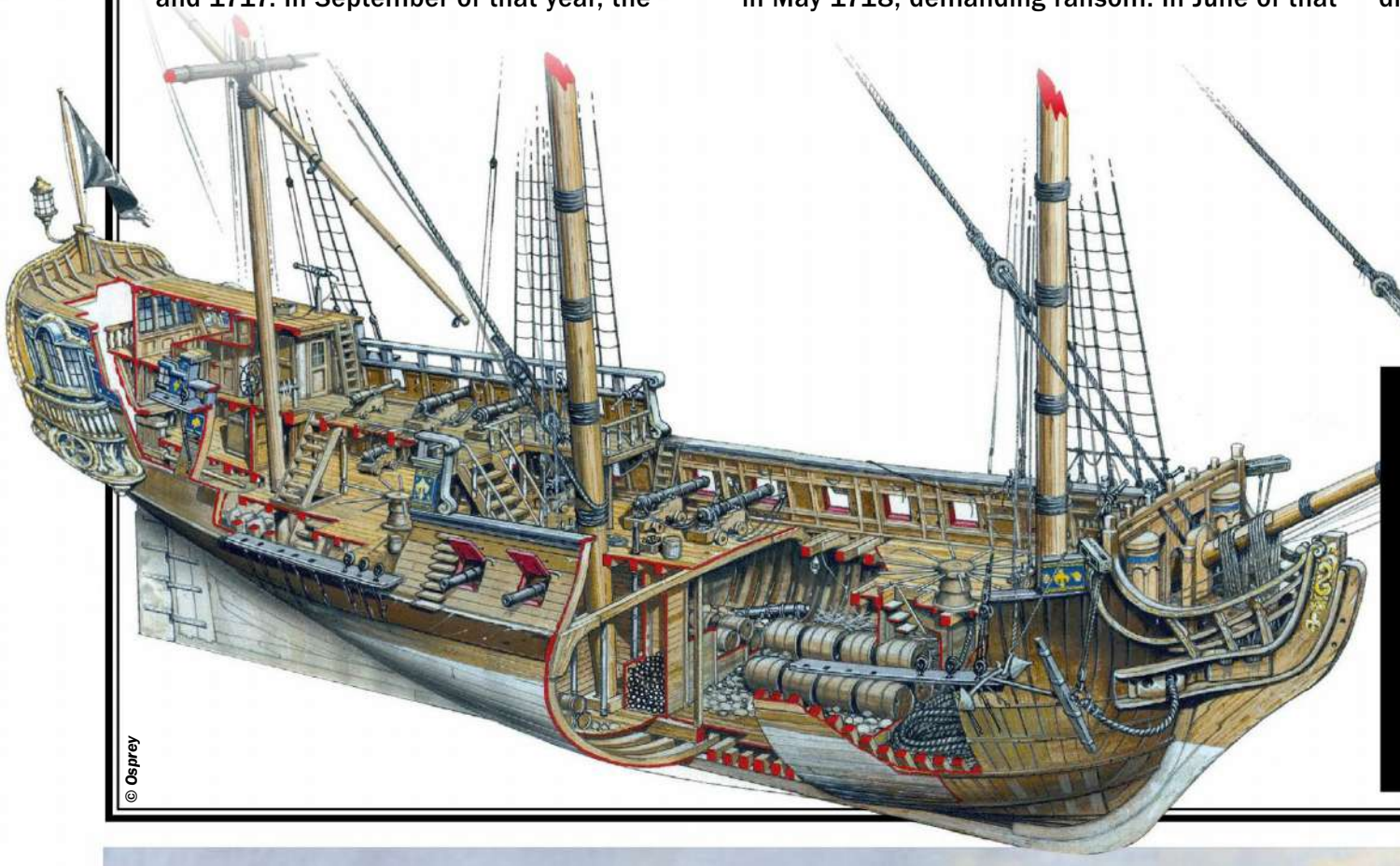
QUEEN ANNE'S REVENGE

This captured frigate gained infamy as the ship commanded by ruthless pirate Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard

Although its origin remains the subject of controversy, Queen Anne's Revenge is believed to have been of English construction and to have served under French command as a naval frigate, merchant vessel and slave ship named La Concorde between 1710 and 1717. In September of that year, the infamous Pirate Edward Teach, famously known as Blackbeard, captured the ship. Renamed, pressed into service as Blackbeard's flagship and carrying 40 or more guns, Queen Anne's Revenge terrorised the Caribbean, and the pirate blockaded the city of Charleston, South Carolina, in May 1718, demanding ransom. In June of that year, Queen Anne's Revenge was grounded, perhaps intentionally, while entering Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina. Blackbeard soon met his death fighting a contingent of troops sent to apprehend him. The wreck of the abandoned Queen Anne's Revenge was discovered in 1996.



The brief career of Queen Anne's Revenge as Blackbeard's flagship ended on a sandbar at Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED: 1710
ORIGIN COUNTRY: GREAT BRITAIN
LENGTH: 31.4 METRES (103 FEET) **CREW:** 150
EFFECTIVE RANGE (APPROX): MONTHS AT SEA; REPLENISHED VIA PRIZES AND VARIOUS PORTS
PRIMARY WEAPON: 24X ENGLISH 6-POUNDER; 3X SWEDISH 6-POUNDER (RECOVERED)
SECONDARY WEAPON: 4X ENGLISH 4-POUNDER; 19 SWEDISH 1-POUNDER; 21 ENGLISH HALF-POUNDER (RECOVERED)

© Osprey

HMS SPEEDY

This 14-gun brig became famous under the command of Lord Cochrane, one of history's legendary naval leaders

The 14-gun brig HMS Speedy, laid down in June 1781 and commissioned two years later, became well known for defying long odds in naval actions against larger warships, including French and Spanish frigates and privateers. It was captured by a superior French squadron in 1794, but soon retaken and returned to Royal Navy service. Its last captain, Thomas Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dunford, was the most successful, capturing the 32-gun Spanish frigate El Gamo on 6 May 1801. Napoleon referred to the daring Cochrane as the Sea Wolf. Captured again by the French, HMS Speedy was given to the Papal States, renamed Sao Paolo, and served until 1806. Author Patrick O'Brian incorporated some of Dunford's exploits in his novel *Master and Commander*, which later became a major motion picture starring Russell Crowe.

This painting by artist Clarkson Frederick Stanfield depicts the capture of the Spanish frigate El Gamo by HMS Speedy

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED: 1783
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: GREAT BRITAIN
LENGTH: 23.9 METRES (78 FEET, 3 INCHES)
EFFECTIVE RANGE: MONTHS AT SEA; REPLENISHED IN VARIOUS PORTS **CREW:** 90
PRIMARY WEAPON: 14X 4-POUNDER
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 12X HALF-POUNDER SWIVEL GUNS

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L'ORIENT

The flagship of the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile, L'Orient sank after a spectacular explosion of her magazine

An imposing warship of the French Océan class, L'Orient mounted 120 guns and was capable of firing a devastating broadside. Laid down at Toulon in May 1790, the ship-of-the-line was originally named Dauphin Royal. With the ascent of the First Republic, its name was changed to Sans-Culotte. Ultimately, it became L'Orient.

Sailing as Sans-Culotte, the warship covered the rear of the French fleet at the Battle of Genoa in March 1795, exchanging fire with the British 74-gun warships Egmont and Bedford. Three years later, L'Orient became the flagship of the French fleet with Admiral Francois-Paul Brueys d'Aigalliers aboard, charged with transporting Napoleon's expeditionary force to Egypt. As the French ships sailed from Toulon to Alexandria, the British fleet gave chase.

After landing Napoleon's army, the French faced the Royal Navy contingent, under Admiral Horatio Nelson, on 1 August 1798 in the Battle of the Nile, the climax of a three-month campaign. Nelson boldly attacked and thoroughly defeated the French. The battered L'Orient was destroyed with the tremendous explosion of its ammunition stores. More than 1,000 French sailors were killed. The event became a public sensation, memorialised in numerous works of art. Nelson was presented with a hand-carved coffin made from the main mast of L'Orient. His body was interred within it after his death at the Battle of Trafalgar.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED: 1793
ORIGIN COUNTRY: FRANCE CREW: 1,079
LENGTH: 65.18 METRES (213.8 FEET)
EFFECTIVE RANGE: MONTHS AT SEA; REPLENISHED IN VARIOUS PORTS
PRIMARY WEAPON: 32X 36-POUNDER
SECONDARY WEAPON: 34X 24-POUNDER; 34X 12-POUNDER; 18X 8-POUNDER; 6X 36-POUNDER CARRONADES

In this painting of the Battle of the Nile by George Arnald, L'Orient erupts in flames as the British warship Swiftsure passes

Source: Wiki / Royal Museums Greenwich

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

LATE 19TH CENTURY & WWI

The advances of the industrial revolution change the face of naval warfare, with heavier, sturdier and more powerful ships launched into the battlefield

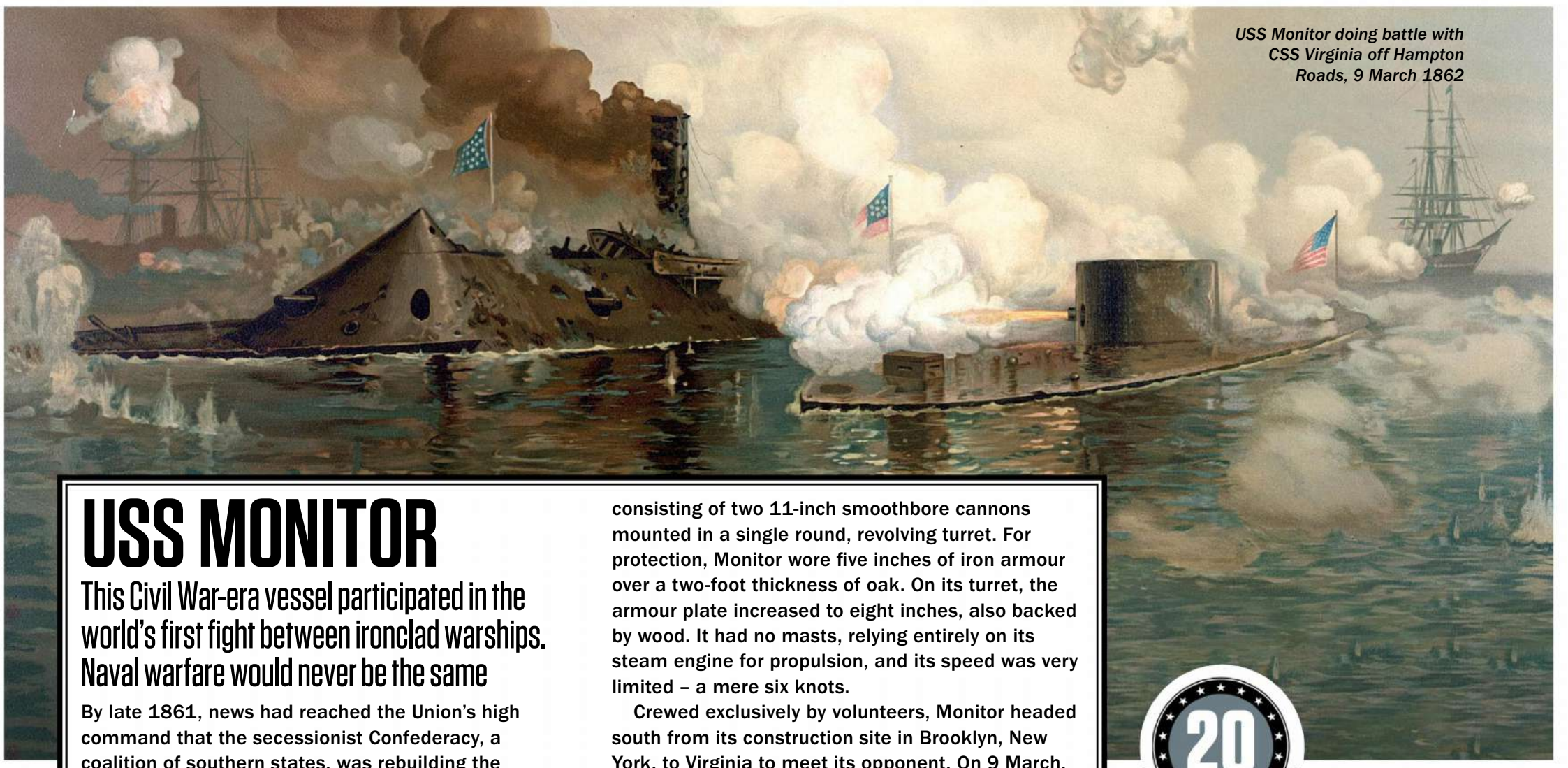
WORDS **MARC DESANTIS**

The 19th century witnessed a dramatic change in naval warfare. Whereas navies previously had been dominated by ships that relied upon the wind or oars for movement, the advent of a new technology, steam, made it possible to manoeuvre regardless of the wind, and faster than any human crew might row.

The first steam engines were built into old-style sailing ships, and outwardly, these vessels would not have looked all that different from their purely sail-driven predecessors – but for the smoke emerging from their stacks. This changed with the appearance of the French Gloire and then its British counterpart, HMS Warrior (now docked at Portsmouth, UK).

Steam power also made it possible for ships to be fitted with heavy iron plates for armour. These 'ironclads', as the ships were known, quickly proved themselves superior to all-wooden warships. During the American Civil War, the Confederate CSS Virginia ruined wooden Union vessels until it was met by the USS Monitor, another ironclad.

In the early 20th century, it had become clear to forward-thinking naval officers that a brand-new type of battleship was necessary, one that had a main armament of all-big guns. Designs were being floated in various countries, but it was the Royal Navy that deployed the first all-big gun battleship in 1906, with the launch of HMS Dreadnought.



USS Monitor doing battle with CSS Virginia off Hampton Roads, 9 March 1862

Source: Wiki / Morgan Riley

USS MONITOR

This Civil War-era vessel participated in the world's first fight between ironclad warships. Naval warfare would never be the same

By late 1861, news had reached the Union's high command that the secessionist Confederacy, a coalition of southern states, was rebuilding the captured steam-powered USS Merrimack as an ironclad warship. Rechristened CSS Virginia, with its wooden hull now affixed with iron plates, it tore through several unarmoured blockading Union ships soon after it went to sea in early 1862. If not stopped, the Northern blockade of Southern ports would come to a rapid end, and the breakaway Confederacy would be able to export cotton and import weapons to continue the struggle with the north.

By the time CSS Virginia had steamed into the conflict, the US Navy had already deployed a counter to the rampaging Confederate ironclad. Dubbed USS Monitor, this ship was the conception of Swedish designer John Ericsson.

Monitor was an ungainly little ship, rising less than a foot-and-a-half above the waves, with armament consisting of two 11-inch smoothbore cannons mounted in a single round, revolving turret. For protection, Monitor wore five inches of iron armour over a two-foot thickness of oak. On its turret, the armour plate increased to eight inches, also backed by wood. It had no masts, relying entirely on its steam engine for propulsion, and its speed was very limited – a mere six knots.

Crewed exclusively by volunteers, Monitor headed south from its construction site in Brooklyn, New York, to Virginia to meet its opponent. On 9 March, in the waters of Hampton Roads, the two ships met, conducting the first battle between ironclad warships. Each ship hit the other many times – Monitor alone suffered no fewer than 23 hits – but neither could inflict mortal damage on the other. The Union declared the duel a triumph, as the danger posed by Virginia to the North's blockade had been dispelled. Though neither ship was sunk, there was one casualty of the fight at Hampton Roads: all-wooden warships had been demonstrated to be outclassed by ironclads, which now ruled the waves.

Monitor's seaworthiness, always suspect on account of its extremely limited freeboard, was to be its undoing. It sank not long after its encounter with the Virginia, succumbing not to enemy fire, but to a storm off Cape Hatteras on 31 December 1862.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED: 1862
ORIGIN COUNTRY : UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
LENGTH: 179 FEET
EFFECTIVE RANGE: 174 MILES
ENGINE: 1 VIBRATING-LEVER STEAM ENGINE; 2 FIRE TUBE BOILERS
CREW: 49
ARMOUR: 5 INCHES OF IRON PLATE OVER TWO FEET OF WOOD (HULL); 8 INCHES OF IRON OVER WOOD
PRIMARY WEAPON: 2 X 11-INCH DAHLGREN SMOOTHBORE CANNONS

HMS DREADNOUGHT

This vessel rendered all other battleships obsolete overnight when it appeared in 1906, sparking an international naval arms race. All battleships made in its image that came afterward were known as 'dreadnoughts'

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE: 1906-1919
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: BRITAIN
LENGTH: 527 FEET
EFFECTIVE RANGE: 6,620 NAUTICAL MILES
ENGINE: 2 STEAM TURBINES; 18 BOILERS
CREW: 800
ARMOUR: 11 INCHES
PRIMARY WEAPON: 10 X 12-INCH CANNONS IN FIVE TURRETS
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 27 X 3-INCH GUNS; 5 X 18 INCH TORPEDO TUBES

Few ships can claim to have had as great or as immediate an impact as HMS Dreadnought. A truly revolutionary design, the Royal Navy battleship made all earlier battleships obsolete as soon as it was launched in December 1906. The name itself became a byword for all ships built in its image, dreadnought, and all prior vessels were to be known henceforth by the term pre-dreadnought.

What made Dreadnought different was largely its armament. Whereas battleships built during the latter 19th century had acquired a welter of guns of multiple calibres with differing ranges, Dreadnought was equipped with a homogeneous main battery of ten 12-inch cannons set in five twin turrets. This was 2.5-times as many heavy guns as was ordinarily found in a pre-dreadnought battleship, and they fired heavier shells over much longer ranges as well.

HMS Dreadnought incorporated numerous advances in naval technology that had come about, particularly in the areas of fire control and propulsion. Fire control was state of the art, meaning it was more likely to hit what it shot at than were older vessels. Its use of a single calibre of fewer, but bigger, guns made spotting the fall of shot easier, and thereby improved accuracy. The ship's speed was superior too. Its modern steam turbines could drive the 18,000-ton battlewagon at speeds 21 knots per hour. Its armour was very thick also, with a 11-inch belt of steel protecting it at the waterline.

The man most responsible for the creation of Dreadnought was First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John 'Jacky' Fisher. Convinced by the Director of Naval Construction, Sir Philip Watts, that the Royal Navy had to act first or be overtaken by foreign navies, such as Japan and the United States, Fisher approved Watts's plan for an innovative new kind of battleship. Dreadnought was constructed in only 14 months, and in great secrecy.

The new warship was so much better than what had existed beforehand, but this did not come without its drawbacks. It not only rendered all foreign battleships obsolete, the Royal Navy's battleships were now out of date. Britain now had the largest fleet of old-fashioned warships in the world.

Thus, the calculus of naval power, measured in absolute numbers of dreadnought-style battleships, had been reset to nil. At this very time, Britain was being challenged for naval mastery by Imperial Germany, and it was possible that it might now outbuild Britain.

Britain therefore had to rebuild its own fleet from scratch. It did so, at vast expense, always keeping ahead of Germany's shipbuilding efforts in the naval arms race that followed.

By the time the First World War erupted in 1914, the Royal Navy had a comfortable lead over Germany in numbers of dreadnoughts.

POWERPLANT
Dreadnought was pushed through the waves by two Parsons steam turbines, turning four propellers. Steam was fed to the turbines by 18 Babcock & Wilcox boilers.

DREYER FIRE CONTROL TABLE
Dreadnought's gunnery was computed using the Dreyer Fire Control Table Mark III. The device calculated range, bearing, and deflection, and these figures were then given to the turrets for aiming its big guns.

GUN TURRET
Dreadnought mounted its ten 12-inch cannons in five twin turrets, with one turret near the bow, one on either side of the ship, and two facing astern.

12-INCH BL MARK X GUN
The 45 calibre Mark X could hurl a 12-inch diameter shell over 18,600 yards at 2,700 feet per second at a rate of fire of around one shell every minute.

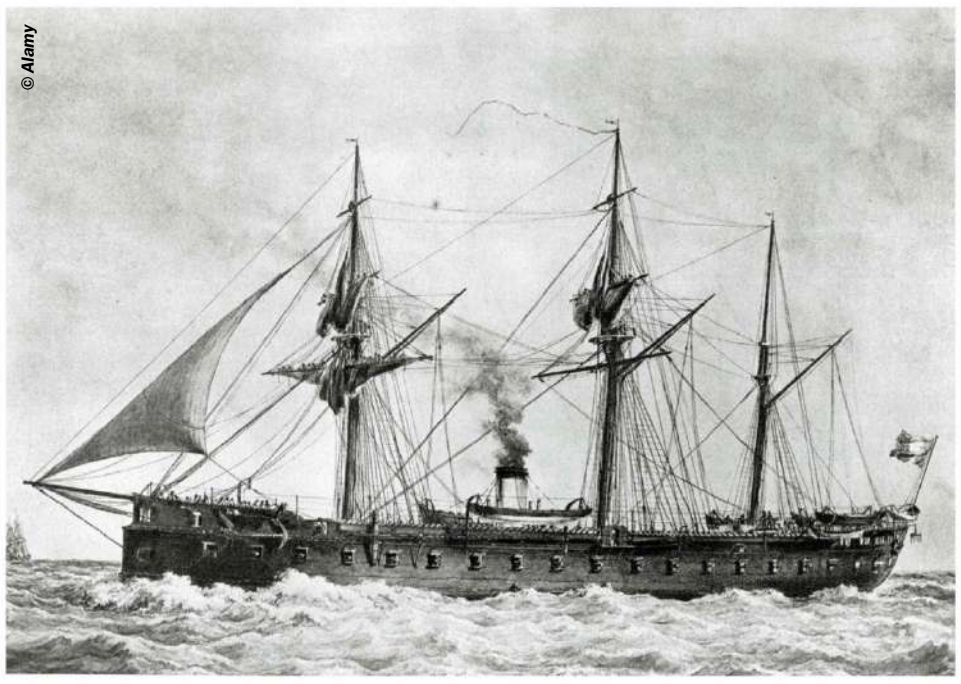
With its heavy main armament, thick armour, and high speed, HMS Dreadnought revolutionised naval warfare

© Alamy

"IT NOT ONLY RENDERED ALL FOREIGN BATTLESHIPS OBSOLETE, THE ROYAL NAVY'S BATTLESHIPS WERE NOW OUT OF DATE"

GLOIRE

France's Gloire, the world's first oceangoing ironclad warship, made unarmoured warships obsolete overnight and worked to touch off a naval arms race among the European powers


© Alamy

Gloire, a steam-powered broadside ironclad, revolutionised naval warfare

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE: 1859-1879
ORIGIN COUNTRY: FRANCE
LENGTH: 255 FEET
ENGINE: 2,500 INDICATED HORSEPOWER SINGLE-SHAFT STEAM ENGINE AND EIGHT BOILERS
CREW: 570
ARMOUR: 4.3-4.7 INCHES OF IRON PLATE OVER 24 INCHES OF WOOD BACKING
PRIMARY WEAPON: 36 X 6.4 INCH RIFLED MUZZLE LOADING GUNS

For centuries, naval warfare had been dominated by wooden ships-of-the-line beholden only to the wind for motive power. Technology continued its inexorable advance, and by the early 19th century, the steam engine had made it possible to move a ship without regard to the wind, and also carry heavy armour. In November 1859, the logical consequence of these developments, Gloire, the world's first oceangoing ironclad warship, was launched at Toulon for the French Navy.

Equipped with a steam engine and eight boilers, the 5,630-ton Gloire was capable of reaching 13 knots. Like sailing warships before it, Gloire's hull was made of wood, but its timbers were covered in iron plates for protection. This armour rendered it practically impervious to the typical naval weapons of the day, and made unprotected ships obsolete at a stroke.

Despite its revolutionary nature, Gloire nonetheless bore a strong resemblance to earlier ships. It still carried sails, on three tall masts, in case it ran out of fuel, and its weapons, 36 rifled muzzle-loading guns, were arrayed to fire broadside, just like those on the all-wooden ships-of-the-line of old.

QUEEN ELIZABETH-CLASS

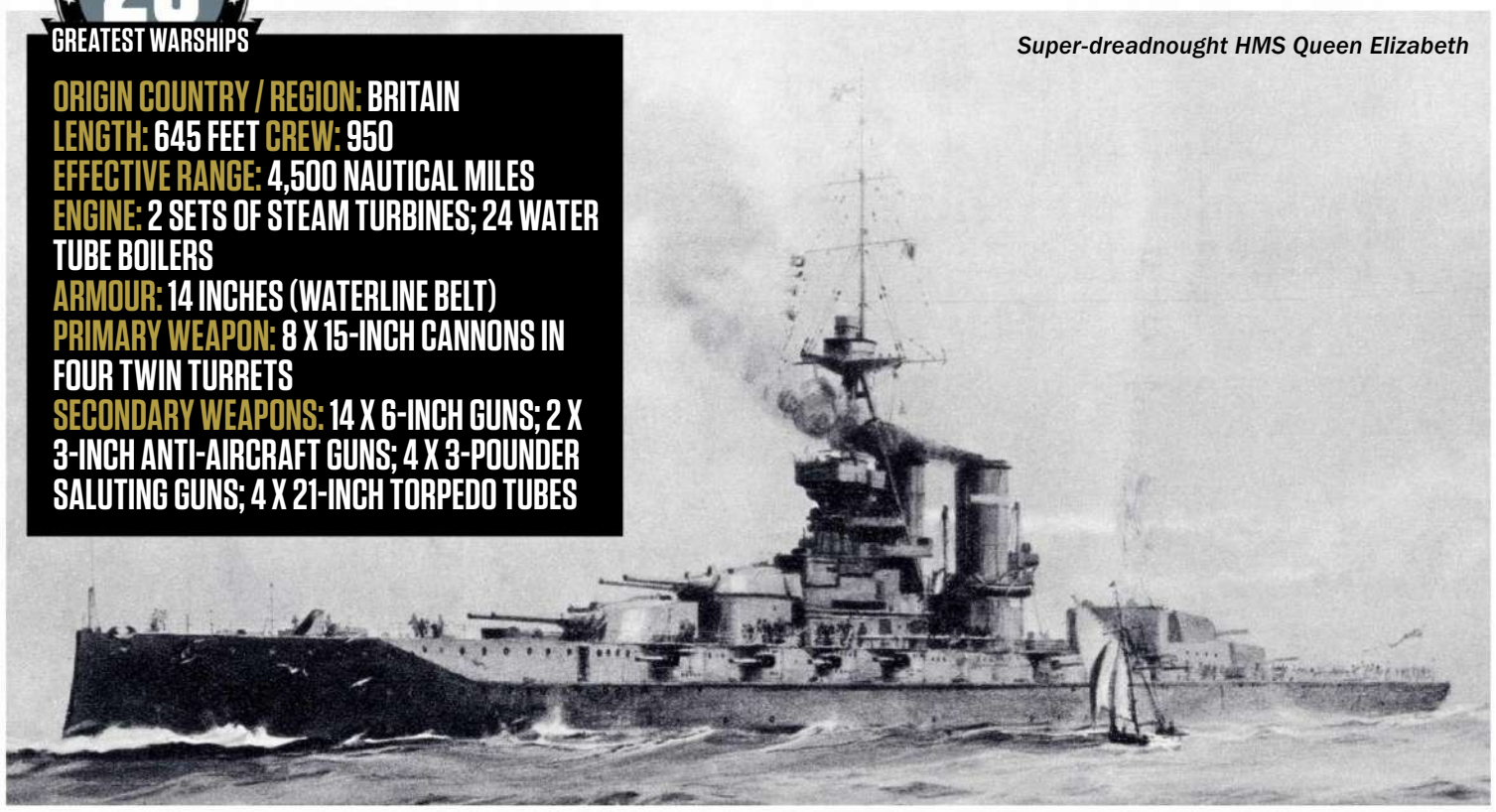
The five Queen Elizabeth-class super-dreadnoughts were the best battleships of the First World War. Subsequent postwar upgrades allowed them to remain potent warships in the Second

The super-dreadnought, a bigger, faster, and more powerful version of the already impressive dreadnought, was intended to allow the Royal Navy to maintain its qualitative edge over its rivals. The Queen Elizabeth-class, arriving in 1914, was the ultimate expression of the super-dreadnought, being an ideal blend of a battleship's most important characteristics: firepower, protection, and speed. Packing a hugely powerful main armament of eight 15-inch guns into four twin turrets, each ship was protected by 14 inches of armour. The five ships of the class: Queen Elizabeth, Warspite, Valiant, Barham, and Malaya were so swift – capable of up to 25 knots – that they were considered 'fast battleships', able to range far ahead of the main battlefleet to find and fix the enemy while slower warships caught up. All five would serve ably with the Royal Navy during WWI.

After World War I, the Queen Elizabeths underwent extensive modifications that enabled them to keep pace with newer warships. Armour protection was enhanced, and accommodations were made for the launch mechanisms for spotter aircraft. To defend against the increasing threat from the air, the vessel's anti-aircraft armament was increased. Above all, it was its heavy calibre cannons that enabled it to remain a force to be reckoned with during the Second World War.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: BRITAIN
LENGTH: 645 FEET **CREW:** 950
EFFECTIVE RANGE: 4,500 NAUTICAL MILES
ENGINE: 2 SETS OF STEAM TURBINES; 24 WATER TUBE BOILERS
ARMOUR: 14 INCHES (WATERLINE BELT)
PRIMARY WEAPON: 8 X 15-INCH CANNONS IN FOUR TWIN TURRETS
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 14 X 6-INCH GUNS; 2 X 3-INCH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS; 4 X 3-POUNDER SALUTING GUNS; 4 X 21-INCH TORPEDO TUBES


Super-dreadnought HMS Queen Elizabeth

Source: Wiki / Willy Stower

GERMAN TYPE UB III U-BOAT

U-boats were the terrors of the seas during the First World War

With Britain ruling the waves in the 19th century, other powers sought means to defeat its mighty fleet of battleships. The submarine offered a lesser power the means to challenge a nation with a more potent surface fleet indirectly, and Imperial Germany, playing catch-up with Britain at sea, was an enthusiastic adopter of submarines.

With its High Seas Fleet bottled up in the North Sea by the Royal Navy's larger Grand Fleet, and its ports blockaded, Germany relied on its U-boats (from Unterseeboots, in German) to take the war to the Allies. Prowling U-boats would sink thousands of merchantmen carrying supplies across the Atlantic to Britain.

Germany's ruthless submarine warfare eventually brought the United States into the war on behalf of the Allies – a disastrous blow to German fortunes.

The 516-ton Type UB III was the most widely produced U-boat of World War I, with 89 vessels constructed. A tubular inner pressure hull, inhabited by a crew of 34, was set inside the larger outer hull.

Ten 50-centimetre torpedo tubes, one facing aft, provided the main offensive punch. A single 8.8cm gun was affixed to the deck to deal with targets that didn't require the expenditure of an expensive torpedo. A Type UB III could achieve 14 knots on the surface and 8 knots below.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

PERIOD ACTIVE: 1917 - 1918
ORIGIN COUNTRY: GERMANY
LENGTH: 55 METERS
EFFECTIVE RANGE (APPROX): 8,500 NAUTICAL MILES
ENGINE: 2 X DIESEL ENGINES; BATTERY-POWERED ELECTRIC MOTORS
CREW: 34
PRIMARY WEAPON: 10 X 50 CM TORPEDO TUBES
SECONDARY WEAPON: 1 X 8.8 CM DECK GUN

German U-boat U-21, under the command of Kapitän-Leutnant Hersing, sinking the Linda Blanche in 1915

"THE SUBMARINE OFFERED A LESSER POWER THE MEANS TO CHALLENGE A NATION WITH A MORE POTENT SURFACE FLEET INDIRECTLY"

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

WWII

Naval power played a significant role in the greatest armed conflict in world history, even as the preeminence of the battleship gave way to the might of the aircraft carrier

WORDS **MICHAEL HASKEW**

World War II provided the ultimate test of the future of naval power. While the aircraft carrier reached maturity, projecting the strength of combat aircraft across the broad expanses of the world's oceans and asserting that no surface ship was impervious to attack from above, the era of the great battleship was emphatically eclipsed. This conflict saw the last actions between these behemoths. During World War II, Allied aircraft carriers decided the fate of nations on the high seas, particularly in the Pacific. The carrier led the fight for air supremacy across the world and brought aircraft to the support of invasions of numerous Japanese-held islands. During the Battle of the Atlantic, carrier-based aircraft complemented the efforts of surface ships, hunting and killing German U-boats that threatened vital shipping lanes. By the end of World War II, modern navies had found new direction. With the aircraft carrier ascendant, nuclear power and the jet engine on the horizon, and continuing demand to 'show the flag', the significance of 20th century naval power was greatly enhanced.

HMS HOOD

Pride of the Royal Navy, this battlecruiser sank following a devastating explosion in combat with the German battleship Bismarck

During the interwar period, HMS Hood was the only battlecruiser completed of four planned in the Admiral-class, and was hugely important to the British fleet. Laid down in September 1916 and launched on 22 August 1918, for two decades Hood was the largest and most powerfully armed warship in the world, displacing over 42,000 long tons, with main armament of eight 15-inch guns.

During the interwar years, Hood participated in numerous cruises to 'show the flag' and circumnavigated the globe in 1923-24. With the outbreak of World War II, Hood served as flagship of Force H in the Mediterranean and participated in the bombardment of the French Fleet at Mers-el-Kebir.

On 24 May 1941, Hood, in company with the battleship HMS Prince of Wales, engaged the German battleship Bismarck and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen in the Battle of the Denmark Strait. Struck by several German shells, Hood was destroyed in a catastrophic explosion, sinking in three minutes and claiming the lives of 1,415 officers and sailors. Only three men survived the single worst disaster suffered by the Royal Navy in 400 years, a tremendous blow to British prestige and morale.

The cause of the explosion, sometimes attributed to a design flaw or the sacrifice of substantial armour protection for speed, is still debated.

Hood's loss during her engagement with the German battleship Bismarck on 24 May 1941. HMS Prince of Wales is in the foreground

Source: Wiki / US Navy

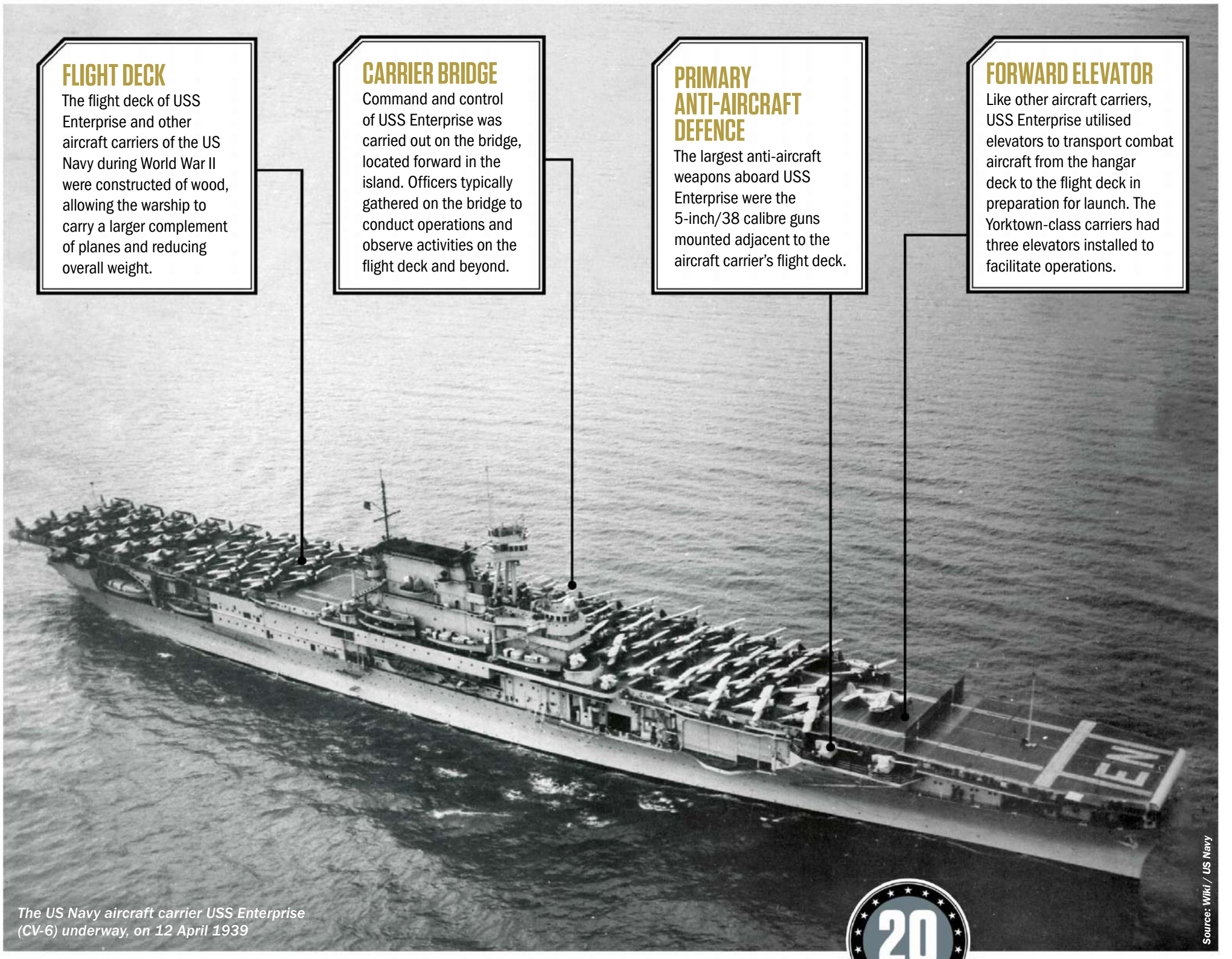
"HOOD WAS DESTROYED IN A CATASTROPHIC EXPLOSION, SINKING IN THREE MINUTES AND CLAIMING THE LIVES OF 1,415 OFFICERS AND SAILORS"

Battlecruiser HMS Hood, pictured during the interwar years, was the last warship of its type built for the Royal Navy

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED / PERIOD ACTIVE: 1920 / WORLD WAR II
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: GREAT BRITAIN
LENGTH: 262.3 METRES (860 FEET, 7 INCHES)
EFFECTIVE RANGE: 5,332 NAUTICAL MILES (9,870 KILOMETRES)
ENGINE: 4X GEARED STEAM TURBINES
CREW: 1,418
ARMOUR: 38MM-381MM (1.5-12 INCHES)
PRIMARY WEAPON: 8X 15-INCH GUNS
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 12X 5.5-INCH GUNS; 4X 4-INCH GUNS; VARIOUS GUNS OF SMALLER CALIBRE

Source: Wiki / Allan C. Green & Adam Cuerden



The US Navy aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6) underway, on 12 April 1939

Source: Wiki / US Navy

USS ENTERPRISE (CV-6)

The USS Enterprise compiled an amazing combat record during World War II in the Pacific

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED / PERIOD ACTIVE: 1938 - WWII
ORIGIN COUNTRY / REGION: USA
LENGTH: 252.2 METRES (827 FEET, 5 INCHES)
EFFECTIVE RANGE: 23,200 KILOMETRES (12,500 NAUTICAL MILES)
ENGINE: X PARSONS STEAM TURBINES
CREW: 2,217
ARMOUR: 2.5-INCH TO 4-INCH BELT
PRIMARY WEAPON: 90 COMBAT AIRCRAFT
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 8X 5-INCH/38-CALIBRE GUNS; VARIOUS 1.1-INCH, .50-CALIBRE, 20MM, AND 40MM ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS

The audacious sign made by sailors aboard the combat-scarred aircraft carrier said it all, "Enterprise vs Japan."

Indeed, in the autumn of 1942, following the sinking of the carrier USS Hornet at the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, the damaged Enterprise was the only combat-ready US Navy aircraft carrier available to counter the Japanese threat in the South Pacific. World War II in the Pacific was less than a year old, and the success of the effort to stem Japanese expansion rested with the Marines and army troops who would eventually take the island of Guadalcanal, couple with the ability of the US Navy to effectively fight the enemy at sea.

Source: Wiki / US Navy

A Japanese bomb explodes on the flight deck of USS Enterprise during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons

American losses were grievous, and so were those of the Japanese. Still, for a time Enterprise was quite simply the fighting ship that held the line. Already, Enterprise had proven itself in combat, and its veteran crew had earned the admiration of its navy comrades and the grudging respect of the enemy. No fewer than three times, Japanese propagandists had asserted that Enterprise had been sunk. When word of the misinformation reached the Americans, they dubbed the carrier 'Grey Ghost'.

Laid down in July 1934 and launched on 3 October 1936, Enterprise was the second carrier of the Yorktown-class, constructed in the Virginia yards of Newport News Shipbuiding. During World War II, Enterprise participated in more major engagements than any other warship of the US Navy, earning 20 battle stars and becoming the most decorated ship in the navy's history. Its aircraft were key participants in the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo as its fighters flew combat air patrol while Hornet launched bombers, and its planes successfully attacked Japanese carriers during the victory at Midway. Enterprise was heavily damaged in the Battles of the Eastern Solomons and the Santa Cruz Islands during the Guadalcanal Campaign but was repaired and returned to service, further participating in the pivotal Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf.

Post-World War II efforts to preserve Enterprise as a floating museum failed. The historic warship was decommissioned in 1947 and later sold for scrap.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED / PERIOD ACTIVE: 1943 / WWII, KOREA, 1980S
ORIGIN COUNTRY: USA
LENGTH: 270.43 METRES (887 FEET, 3 INCHES)
EFFECTIVE RANGE (APPROX): 12,948 NAUTICAL MILES (23,979 KILOMETRES)
ENGINE: 4X GENERAL ELECTRIC GEARED STEAM TURBINES
CREW: 1,921
ARMOUR: 38MM-495MM (1.5-19.5 INCHES)
PRIMARY WEAPON: 9 16-INCH GUNS; LATER 32X TOMAHAWK CRUISE MISSILES
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 20X 5-INCH GUNS; VARIOUS GUNS OF SMALLER CALIBRE; LATER 16X HARPOON ANTI-SHIP MISSILES AND OTHER DEFENCE SYSTEMS

The main 16-inch guns of the battleship USS Iowa fire during exercises conducted in the Pacific in 1944

"IOWA ALSO TRANSPORTED PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE 1943 TEHRAN CONFERENCE"

USS IOWA

The battleship USS Iowa, lead ship of its class, was decommissioned and returned to service periodically for a half century

USS Iowa was the lead ship of the last battleship type placed in service with the US Navy. At the height of World War II in the Pacific, Iowa and its sister ships accompanied the navy's fast aircraft carriers during operations against the Japanese fleet and enemy-held islands. Iowa also transported President Franklin D. Roosevelt on his journey to the 1943 Tehran Conference and served as flagship for Admiral William F. Halsey during the Japanese surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay, 1945. During the Korean War, Iowa bombarded targets on the North Korean coast. After years in reserve, the battleship was modernised in the mid-1980s, equipped with Tomahawk cruise missiles, and served until 1990. Today, Iowa is a floating museum in the port of Los Angeles, California.

Source: Wiki / USAF

BISMARCK

A major threat to Allied shipping in the Atlantic, Bismarck was hunted down and sunk by the Royal Navy

© Getty

The German battleship Bismarck was a menace to Allied convoys in the Atlantic with its powerful 15-inch guns

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

YEAR COMMISSIONED / PERIOD ACTIVE: 1940 / WORLD WAR II
ORIGIN COUNTRY: NAZI GERMANY
LENGTH: 248 METRES (813 FEET, 8 INCHES)
ENGINE: 3X GEARED STEAM TURBINES
RANGE: (APPROX): 8,870 NAUTICAL MILES (16,430 KILOMETRES)
ARMOUR: 50MM-360MM (2-14.25 INCHES)
PRIMARY WEAPON: 8X 15-INCH GUNS
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 12X 5.9-INCH GUNS; 16X 4.1-INCH GUNS; VARIOUS GUNS OF SMALLER CALIBRE

Named for Germany's Iron Chancellor, the battleship Bismarck was the first in a class of two ships intended to challenge the supremacy of the British Royal Navy during World War II.

Laid down in July 1936 and launched on 14 February 1939, Bismarck was an imposing warship, displacing more than 41,000 long tons. Its main armament consisted of eight powerful 15-inch guns.

During the Battle of the Atlantic, Bismarck was ordered to attack Allied merchant shipping, and its destructive potential was readily apparent. The Royal Navy recorded one of the most stirring chapters in its history with the pursuit and sinking of this enemy battleship. Bismarck, however, struck first. In the Battle of the Denmark Strait on 24 May 1941, Bismarck and heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen sank the battlecruiser HMS Hood and damaged the battleship HMS Prince of Wales. On 26 May, a fortunate aerial torpedo hit by a British Fairey Swordfish biplane, flying from the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal, ended Bismarck's run for safety.

At dawn the following day, a Royal Navy task force led by the battleships King George V and Rodney opened fire on Bismarck, inflicting heavy damage. The German battleship eventually sank about 400 miles off the French port of Brest.

YAMATO

The Japanese super battleship Yamato and it sister Musashi, though large and powerful, fell victim to American naval air power

The Japanese super battleship Yamato and its sister Musashi were the largest battleships ever constructed. The lead ship of the class, Yamato, was built in the Kure Navy Yard and displaced 64,000 long tons on completion.

The Yamato served as flagship for Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto during the Battle of Midway and was deployed during the Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf. Its last sortie occurred during the Okinawa Campaign. Yamato was ordered to undertake a suicide mission, attacking US Navy assets and then beaching to function as an artillery battery. However, the great battleship was intercepted by American aircraft on 7 April 1945, sustaining at least 11 torpedo and seven bomb hits before sinking. Musashi was sunk by American aircraft during the Battle of Leyte Gulf on 24 October 1944.

20 GREATEST WARSHIPS

ORIGIN COUNTRY: JAPAN
YEAR COMMISSIONED / PERIOD ACTIVE: 1941 / WWII
LENGTH: 263 METRES (862 FEET, 9 INCHES)
EFFECTIVE RANGE: (APPROX): 7,200 NAUTICAL MILES (13,300 KILOMETRES)
ENGINE: 4X GEARED STEAM TURBINES
CREW: 2,500
ARMOUR: 50MM-650MM (2-25.6 INCHES)
PRIMARY WEAPON: 9X 18.1-INCH GUNS
SECONDARY WEAPONS: 12X 6.1-INCH GUNS; 12X 5-INCH GUNS; VARIOUS GUNS OF SMALLER CALIBRE

Yamato running machinery trials off Bungo Strait (outside Sukumo Bay) on 20 October 1941

Source: Wiki / Hasuya Hirohata

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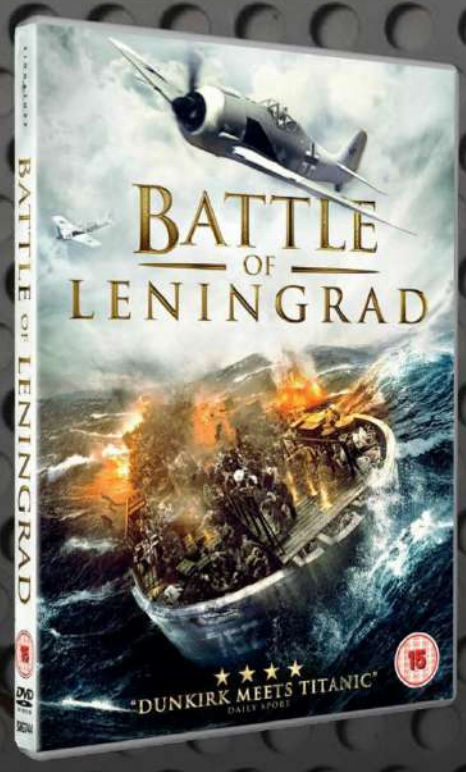

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PRUSSIA'S REBEL

Ferdinand von Schill is widely seen in Germany as a symbol of resilience and a hero. But how did a minor figure of the Napoleonic wars become such a myth during the 19th century?

WORDS **DR BERNARD WILKIN**

The name of Schill is rarely recognised outside of Germany, even by history enthusiasts. This fact is surprising considering that this officer's revolt was discussed all over Europe at the time, and happened just at the point the French public was becoming tired of the constant state of war triggered by Napoleon's Imperial regime.

The beginning

Ferdinand von Schill was born in Wilmsdorf (Saxony) on 6 January 1776. His father was an officer and had served for Austria, Saxony and Prussia. Still young, Schill joined the Prussian cavalry and during the war against France, he was a sub-lieutenant in a dragoon regiment of the queen and was wounded at the battle of Auerstadt. Despite his injuries, he managed to escape captivity.

Schill then served on the island of Rügen before fighting at the fortress of Kolberg, besieged by the French from March to July 1807. During the siege, Schill was ordered to find supplies and given intelligence missions by Major von Gneisenau. The same year, the young officer was tasked by King Frederick William III to form a free corps cavalry unit. With it, he harassed the French successfully but also occasionally failed, like during the assault against Stargard on 15 February 1807. This campaign allowed Schill to further his knowledge of Pomerania and its inhabitants.

Several stories about Schill's adventures, probably partly invented, were told among Pomeranians, a sign that his popularity was already growing. One such story is often repeated in biographies.

In 1807, Major Schill captured seven magnificent Arabic horses belonging to Napoleon. Furious, the emperor put a bounty on Schill's head, offering 100 Napoleon (gold coins) to his captor. Schill was not concerned by the Emperor's threat and even offered a bounty for his head. Napoleon, who cared deeply about his horses, offered 4,000 gold crowns and sent a letter to "the bandit chief Schill". The major answered, "Dear brother, I am even more pleased now to have taken from you seven horses. Looking at your letter, I understand that you are really attached to them but I cannot accept your 4,000 gold crowns because I do not need money. Even if I needed coins, I would find well enough in the French Army's treasure. If, however, you give back the four horses of the Brandenburg gate that you stole, I would return those that I took without further payment." Von Schill promptly sent this letter to "the colonel of all bandits, my honourable brother Napoleon".

Once peace was signed between France, Prussia and Russia, Schill was rewarded with the rank of major and the cross of the Pour le Mérite order for his bravery during the campaign. During that time, Major Schill joined the Tugendbund, a secret society working on the unification of Germany and the end of the French occupation.

The revolt

On 8 April 1809, the war between France and Austria resumed. Schill decided to move against the Kingdom of Westphalia, whose people were deemed ready to turn against their ruler, Jerome Bonaparte. On 28 April, von Schill left Berlin with his hussar regiment under false pretences. Once out of the capital, he falsely told his men that he was acting on the King's orders. If von Schill's initiative was seen as a good thing by the people, it was perceived negatively by the Prussian government, who feared that the lies of a hot-headed major would be used by Napoleon against them.

At that time the humiliating lessons of 1806-1807 were still in everybody's mind and Frederick William III knew that Prussia's

***Left:** Ferdinand von Schill wearing his Pour le Mérite*

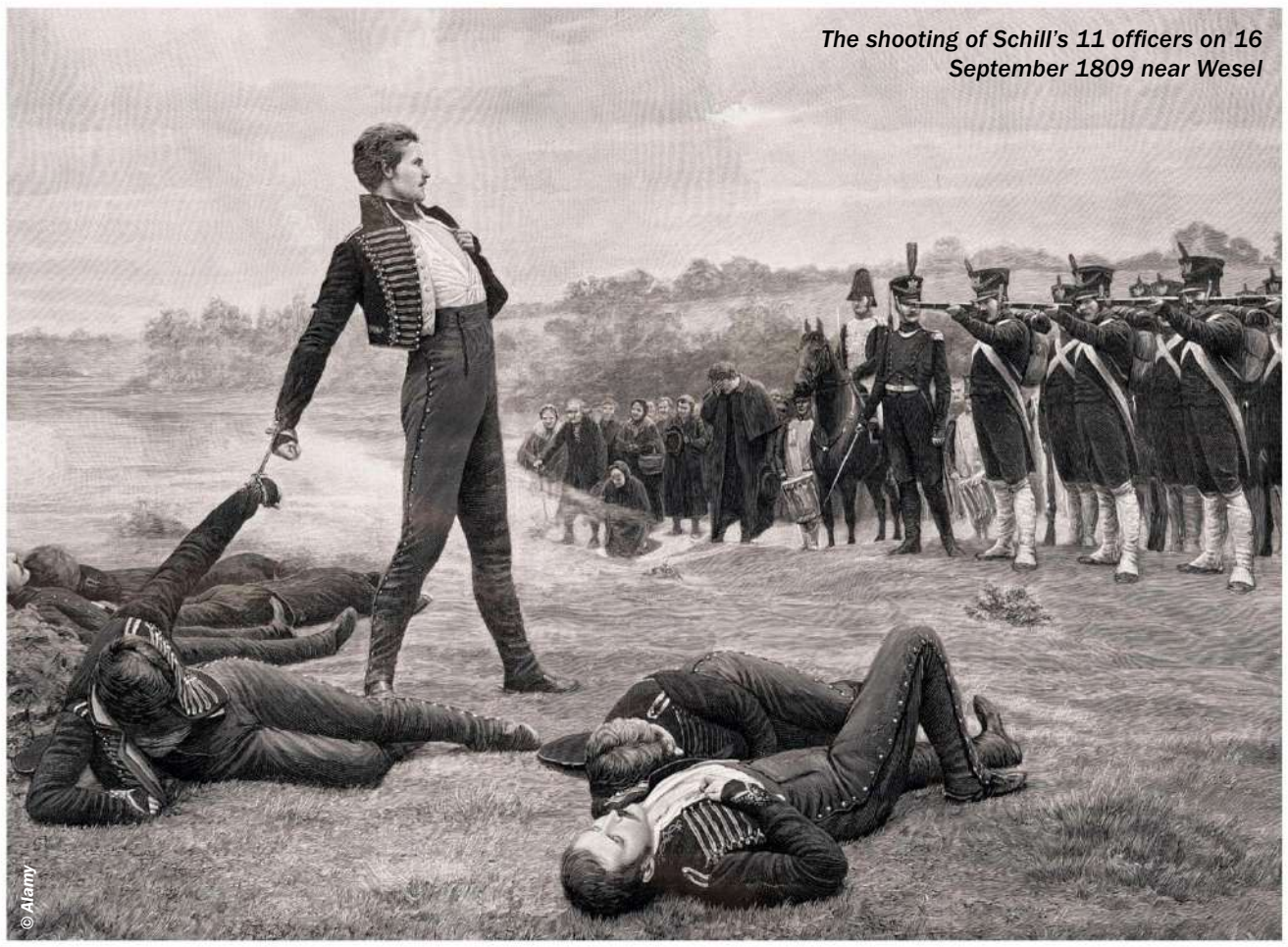
Sources: WIKI / David Lozzo

"ONCE PEACE WAS SIGNED BETWEEN FRANCE, PRUSSIA AND RUSSIA, SCHILL WAS REWARDED WITH THE RANK OF MAJOR AND THE CROSS OF THE POUR LE MÉRITE ORDER"

FERDINAND VON SCHILL

After his death, Ferdinand von Schill's head was sent to Jerome Bonaparte. Fortunately, a death mask in plaster was done and is currently kept at the German History Museum of Berlin. This cast shows a very distinctive wound to the face. It was used by several German artists in the 19th century to paint portraits or re-create romantic depictions of his life and death at the hands of the French. His head was kept by a Dutch surgeon working at the University of Leiden until 1837, when it was given to German patriots for the dedication of a monument in Brunswick.

Image: Jean-Michel Girard, The Art Agency



The shooting of Schill's 11 officers on 16 September 1809 near Wesel

involvement next to Austria would probably destroy his Kingdom. Schill's actions were quickly debated in the whole of Europe.

Fouché, Napoleon's minister of police, wrote to the emperor on 7 May 1809 that the Parisian public opinion was convinced that Prussia had declared war on France. On 14 May, Napoleon answered that he is misled and that Prussia was not making a move. Moreover, he had given orders to suppress this revolt and everything would be over soon. The situation was uncomfortable for the French. At the same time as Major Schill's actions, two German princes deposed by Napoleon, the Duke of Brunswick-Oels and the Landgrave of Hesse, were also trying to capitalise on the Austro-French war to fuel local rebellions.

Schill began his campaign by occupying the town of Dessau on 2 May 1809. From there, he launched a manifesto aimed at the German nation. Despite the first Austrian defeats, he decided to carry on his actions and fought not far from Magdeburg. He won the day, but a bounty of 10,000 francs was put on his head. Thanks to his victories, Major Schill's followers swelled in number and even integrated deserters from the Westphalian army. Napoleon, resolved to kill this rebellion before it could grow, dispatched General Gratien and his Dutch, Danish and French troops.

The capture of Stralsund

Von Schill took the direction of the Swedish part of Pomerania through Mecklenburg. He hoped to easily control Stralsund, almost left empty, and use the sea to receive weapons and supplies promised by Britain. Having captured a great quantity of muskets and cannons at Wismar and Rostock, he went for Stralsund, which he reached on 25 May 1809. Two days before, soldiers from Mecklenburg and Poland tasked with the defence of the place had fled for the island of Usedom. The only remaining unit was the 72nd regiment of French artillery. Von Schill went through the Tribsee gate with 30 horsemen and reached the heart of the city without opposition. The brave major stopped on the old market where a group of French artillerymen and their captain stood. Taken by surprise, they surrendered but the captain was released after having promised that the garrison would give up. Most of von Schill's men entered Stralsund, acclaimed by the people. In various places, isolated French soldiers were captured. However, the day was not yet over.

Sixty artillerymen had refused to surrender and took cover, barricading the streets. When they fired at von Schill's lancers, they disrupted their ranks. The major sent an emissary to ask for their surrender but the unfortunate messenger was mortally shot. Several salvos were unable to break the valiant artillerymen, who fired again and again. Von Schill ordered his men to dismount their horses and went forward. One group walked toward the arsenal while the other tried to turn the French. The chasseurs, led by a man of talent, were able to rush against the cannons that the artillerymen defended bravely.

The French were almost all killed but a few remaining survivors managed to escape the carnage and took refuge inside a building. Unfortunately for them, they forgot to barricade an opening, from where von Schill's men entered while the main door was broken by an axe. All the French who refused to surrender were executed. The major was now the master of Stralsund. Having secured the city, he organised the defence and asked for 1,000 workers.

Von Schill's forces were composed of two Brandenburg hussar regiments, three squadrons of chasseurs, reinforced by a free corps of horsemen, and two infantry battalions. On 26 May, von Schill armed the Landwehr and ordered a levy, but only 400 men answered the call. Struck by this lack of enthusiasm for the cause, his officers began to doubt that the defence of Stralsund was sound. However, the fierce major managed to dismiss their doubts.

At the same time, General Gratien, commanding the Napoleonic forces, had made

The death of Ferdinand von Schill

Ferdinand von Schill's death mask. The wound to his face inflicted by the French is clearly visible

Source: Wiki / Sendker

The head of Ferdinand von Schill presented at a banquet

© Alamy

his junction with General Ewald, a French ally leading Danish troops. This 6,000-strong army reached the gates of Stralsund on 30 May. At 6.00am, von Schill ordered his 2,500 men to defend the assigned positions.

The end

There are at least two different versions of what happened next. The first and most famous was told by Gratien and Ewald. Another one can be found in the memoirs of French colonel Séruzier. His testimony has probably been ignored due to his lack of notoriety but also because he painted a very negative picture of Schill. Séruzier's memoirs were written in 1817 while its author was in prison waiting for his trial for treason against Louis XVIII. During the battle of Stralsund, Séruzier was ordered by General Saint-Hilaire to pursue Major Schill. After his death, Séruzier was recalled and had to leave in a hurry, explaining why he was unable to write a report.

Here is what he witnessed: "As soon as I was certain that my enemy was in Stralsund, I charged with my men, entered and started fighting. As he could have managed to escape, I was determined to follow him to capture or kill him. To do so, I ordered my old corporal Beckmann, who spoke decent German, to wear a peasant's costume and explained what Schill looked like. When I was certain that he could recognise him, I ordered him go after him. Beckmann swore that Schill would not live another day. We agreed on a way to tell that

"THE MAN WAS DEAD BUT THE MYTH WAS ALIVE AND WELL. HIS REPUTATION GREW OVER THE 19TH CENTURY"

the deed has been done, in order to come from everywhere and capture the partisans, deprived of their fearsome leader. At that point, Schill's men were already disorganised and had no discipline. The people of Stralsund were alarmed as they feared that those bandits would pillage the city. As soon as my man had left, I sent my infantry and my squadrons forward, asking them to be as silent as possible while entering the city. They had to wait for the signal: two shots before rushing and killing all armed men.

"Once my instructions were given, I waited anxiously but, after 15 minutes, heard the signal and launched the assault. All of Schill's men were massacred in 30 minutes. The perfect execution of our plan and the speed frightened the partisans.

"The rumour of Schill's death was spreading everywhere, including among his men, spreading horror and despair … Beckmann came to me and asked if I wanted to see Schill. I followed my old corporal and saw this famous Prussian major dead. Following my orders, he had entered a café and had seen Schill. Grabbing one of his men's musket, he had shot Schill at close-range."

On 22 July 1809, the war minister wrote to Fouché, "I am pleased to inform your excellency that 360 soldiers and 11 officers belonging to Schill's gang were imprisoned." On 2 August, Napoleon ordered the execution of the 11 officers, who were shot after having been shown in several German cities.

The man was dead but the myth was alive and well. His reputation grew over the 19th century. A symbol of German heroism and unity, the man became a legend and had many monuments erected to his memory in several cities. Even after the First World War, Schill remained a symbol of courage through tough times and incarnated the spirit of resistance.

FURTHER READING

- *ANECDOTES SUR NAPOLÉON, PUBLIÉES PAR IRELAND,* PARIS 1823
- *NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, CORRESPONDANCE GÉNÉRALE,* T.9, PARIS 2013
- ANDRÉ JOUBERT, *LA RÉVOLTE DU MAJOR SCHILL, D'APRÈS DES DOCUMENTS NOUVEAUX ET INÉDITS,* ANGERS 1873
- *JOURNAL DE L'EMPIRE,* ANNÉE 1809
- *MÉMOIRES MILITAIRES DU BARON SÉRUZIER, COLONEL D'ARTILLERIE LÉGÈRE, MIS EN ORDRE ET RÉDIGÉS PAR SON AMI LE MIERE DE CORVEY,* PARIS, 1823

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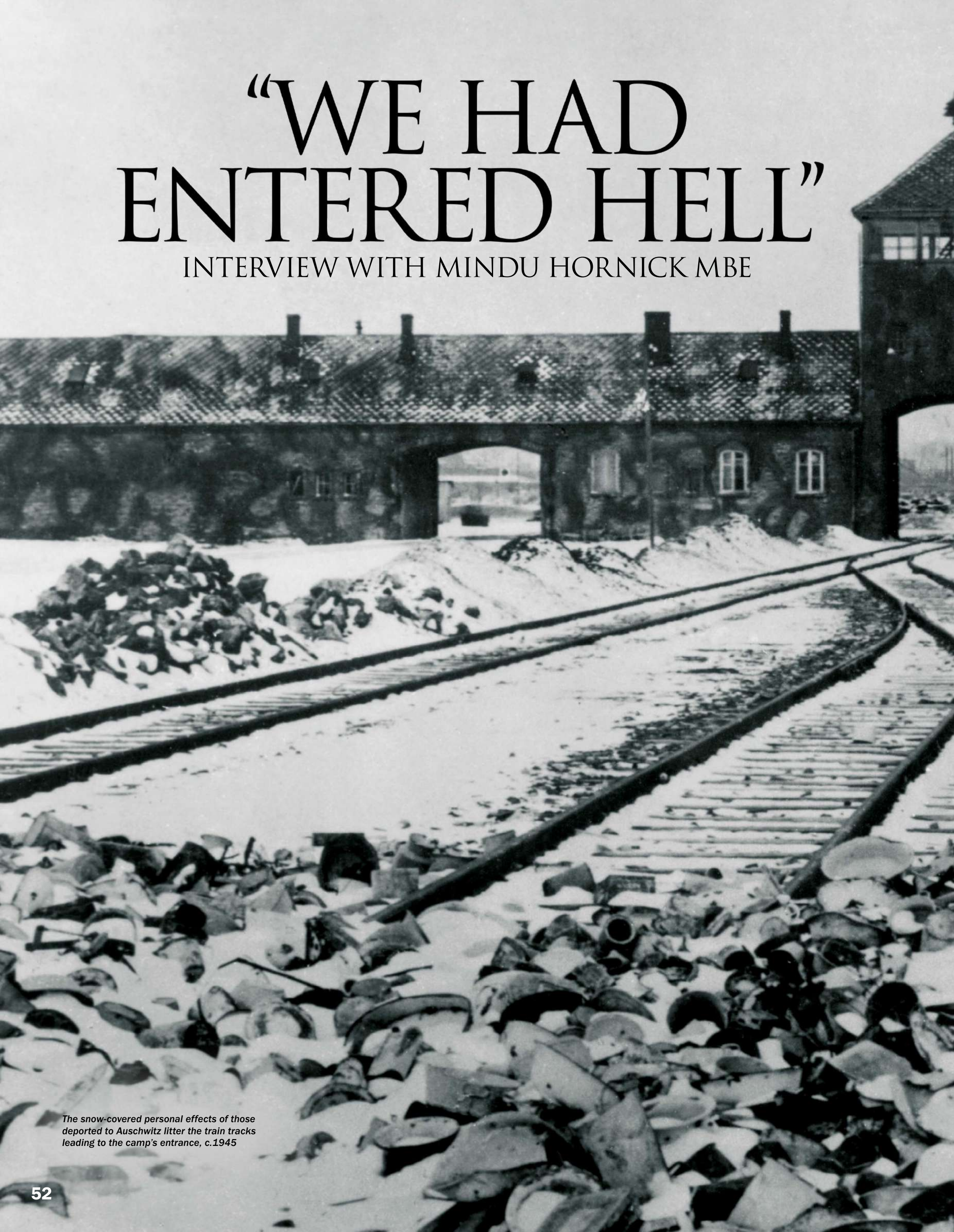
"WE HAD ENTERED HELL"

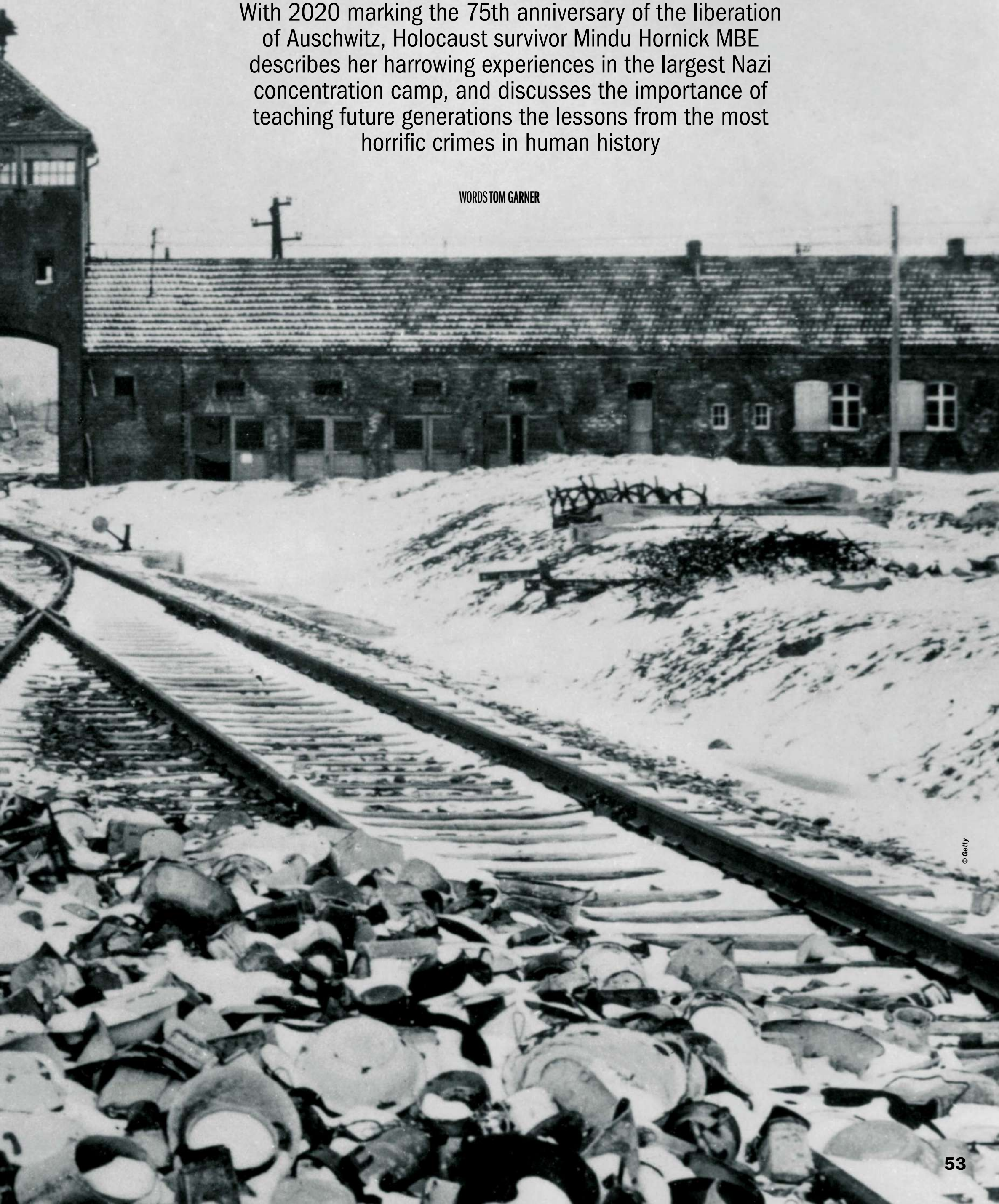
INTERVIEW WITH MINDU HORNICK MBE



The snow-covered personal effects of those deported to Auschwitz litter the train tracks leading to the camp's entrance, c.1945

With 2020 marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Holocaust survivor Mindu Hornick MBE describes her harrowing experiences in the largest Nazi concentration camp, and discusses the importance of teaching future generations the lessons from the most horrific crimes in human history

WORDS **TOM GARNER**



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INTERVIEW WITH MINDU HORNICK MBE

Auschwitz is a name that symbolises industrialised terror, genocide and sickening evil. Approximately 1.1 million people were murdered at this camp complex, with the vast majority being Jews from across Nazi-occupied Europe. With its gas chambers and crematoriums, Auschwitz epitomised the monstrous reality of the Nazis' 'Final Solution' and the scale of the atrocities remain difficult to comprehend.

27 January 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet forces. Despite the passage of time, the Holocaust remains an indelible stain on humanity and for survivors, the horror remains an open wound. One of those who survived was Mindu Hornick who spent six months imprisoned at Auschwitz before she was transferred to Neuengamme concentration camp. Now a tireless and honoured campaigner for Holocaust education, Hornick lost all but one of her immediate family and barely survived herself.

Her testimony is an unimaginable account of how a young teenage girl endured the unendurable in impossible circumstances.

"Terribly frightened"

Born in Slovakia in 1929 as Margareta 'Mindu' Klein, Hornick had an idyllic childhood with her father Morrise, mother Chaya, older sister Baylu and two younger brothers Julius and Samuel, "I have lovely memories of life before the war. We lived in a peaceful town with a nice little Jewish community. My father was a wood and hay merchant and the local area was good for growing fruit. We had an orchard and my father supplied the apples to cider factories. We also had good relations with our neighbours and school friends."

In 1939, Hornick's part of Slovakia was given to the Hungarians by the Nazis, "It had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before WWI and they imported Hungarian teachers to Slovakia. As a minority group we had to go to Hungarian schools. For my sins, I can still speak Hungarian!"

Despite the commencement of hostilities, Hornick's family remained relatively safe, until 1941. "Life was reasonable but things started to get very difficult when my father was recruited into the so-called 'army'. He and others had no uniform and carried just a shovel while they wore the Star of David. They did menial tasks for the Germans such as digging trenches and clearing mines."

Hornick's father's business was confiscated and the situation worsened in 1942, "Lorries came and our community was collected and taken to Galicia and Serebrianka [concentration camps]. However, about eight families whose husbands were in the 'army' were left behind. This was because the Hungarian president Miklós Horthy had collaborated with the Germans and said that the families of the men in the military workforce should stay at home. It was suddenly like a ghost town."

The majority of Hornick's Jewish community – including some of her family – had a dreadful fate, "Two of my grandparents [the others lived in Prague] were in these lorries. The people were taken to the edge of a wood to dig their own graves and were shot into them. It was terrible."

For those left behind, life became a daily struggle, "We were terribly frightened. I don't know how our mother fed us but she must have been very resourceful.

"I remember her going out to some farmers and she came back with a sack of flour to make our own bread. It was very, very hard."

In 1943, Hornick's own family were taken from their home, "We were suddenly collected and taken to a ghetto in Košice. They had sectioned a part of the city and we lived in a hay loft because there was nowhere to put us."

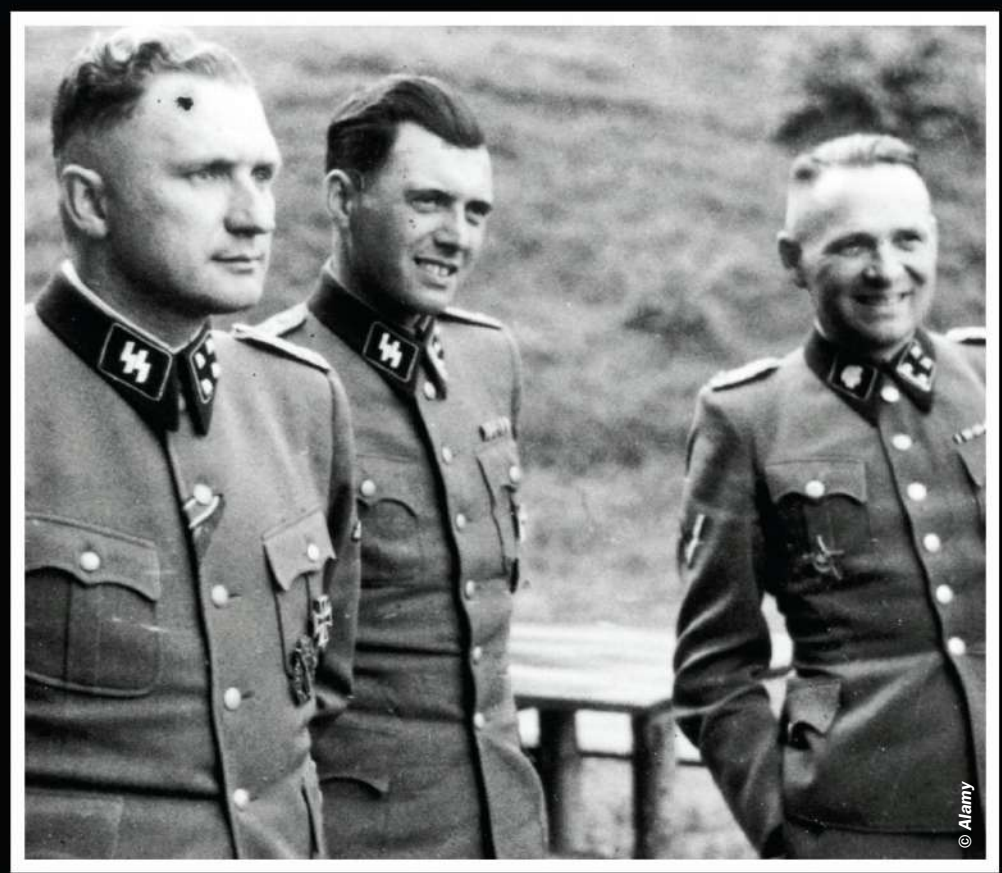
Hornick never saw her father again and the family lived in the ghetto for just six weeks before they were again rounded up, "We were put into cattle trucks and had no idea what was happening. There were 70 of us to each truck and the whole transport consisted of mothers and children. There was a bucket in the middle and we shunted forwards and backwards. We travelled for three days and nights and it was horrific. Children were crying and some little ones died because their mothers could not feed them."

© Getty

THE ‘ANGEL OF DEATH’

Hornick witnessed the sinister selections of Josef Mengele, the infamous doctor who conducted monstrous experiments at Auschwitz

An SS officer and qualified doctor, Mengele was the chief camp physician of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) from 1943. He became notorious for conducting genetic research on human subjects with no regard for their welfare or safety. He experimented on twins and people with physical abnormalities with the supposed intention of proving the biological supremacy of the Aryan race. Many of his victims died during cruel invasive procedures while others were subsequently dispatched to the gas chambers after a few weeks.



Hornick remembers Mengele as a well-dressed figure who casually dispensed murder, “Dr Mengele, who was known as the ‘Angel of Death’ used to walk around very often. He was a good-looking man and immaculately dressed with boots and buttons that were always shiny. He always carried a pair of white leather gloves and did daily selections for people who either didn’t look well or were going for the gas chambers. If he waved the gloves at anyone standing in a row and they walked out, you’d never see them again.”

Mengele was transferred to Gross-Rosen concentration camp in January 1945 and scandalously evaded capture after the war. He never faced justice for his crimes and died in Brazil in 1979.

Mengele (centre) pictured at Auschwitz in 1944 with two of the camp’s commandants – Richard Baer (left) and Rudolf Höss (right)

Hungarian Jews arrive at Auschwitz to be hurriedly selected for slave labour or the gas chambers, June 1944. Hornick and her family arrived in the exact same circumstances in late 1943

At the end of this journey, Hornick arrived at the destination – a name she did not know but soon would never forget: Auschwitz.

“We had entered hell”

For the women and children on the train, Auschwitz was an unfamiliar place, “We happened to be sitting by the door and my mother asked if we could see anything.

“I looked out and could read the name ‘Oswiecim’, which is the Polish for ‘Auschwitz’. My mother said she had never heard of the place when suddenly there was a ‘clink, clink’ and the doors opened.”

A chaotic scene was revealed, “You can imagine the shock when these gates opened. The SS were marching up and down with enormous Alsatians and there were loudspeakers everywhere.

“It was unbelievable, particularly with not knowing what was going to happen.

“A man in striped clothing then jumped on our wagon because the Germans didn’t do any of the menial tasks. He said to my mother in Yiddish, ‘Which are your children?’.

She said, ‘These are my girls’ and there were also my younger brothers. He said to my mother, ‘Let the girls go ahead, you will see them later’. He was so persuasive and as he was dragging me off he told me and my sister to say that we were 17 and 19.”

Hornick and her sister were urged to move quickly, “He also told us to say that we were seamstresses because you had to be useful for some kind of work. He then said, ‘Go, go, go! You will see your mother’. He was so convincing because, looking back on it, he knew that the whole carriage of mothers and children were going to the gas chambers.”

Chaya, Julius and Samuel were left behind and Hornick could only fleetingly make out her mother in the confusion, “It was a sunny day and we joined this enormous trail of people. In front of us was a lady with several siblings and a girl about our age.

“They were pushing them through the main gate and the girl could see they were pushing her mother and siblings to the left. She started crying, so the SS men said, ‘If you want to go with your mother, go with her’. I think the prisoner knew what was going on so that’s why he wanted us to go ahead. We couldn’t see our mother but I remember looking back and seeing her spotted scarf…”

This brief sight was the last time that Hornick and her sister would see their mother and brothers again before they were taken through Auschwitz’s infamous main gate, “As we got further on we got to the gate that said ‘Arbeit Macht Frei’, which meant ‘Work Makes You Free’. We went through and the guards were yelling ‘Schnell!’. There were watchtowers with machine-guns pointing at us and there were bodies everywhere. We looked at each other and really thought that we had entered hell. I’d never seen anything like it and there was this terrible smell with grey ash falling all over. We didn’t know what it was at the time.”

Once they had entered the main camp, the sisters and other new prisoners were subjected to a series of humiliations, “The guards were obsessed with people standing in rows of five and marching. What did we know about marching? However, we had to [learn fast] and started doing it. They took us to a big hole where we had to undress and there were all these male soldiers and capos around us. Can you imagine what it was like for girls of that

A Häftlingskarte was a handwritten card containing information about individual prisoners in the Nazi concentration camp system. This pictured example was Hornick's. It detailed her date of birth, gender, religion and that she had been admitted to Auschwitz before being transferred to Neuengamme. Tellingly, her name was replaced by the serial number '3064'

Häftlingskarte

Einlieferungsstelle	Einlieferungsdatum Tag	Monat	Jahr	Häftlingsart	Geburts- Tag	Monat	Jahr	Geschlecht	Familienstand	Kinder m	w
Stapo	00	00	00	Jüdin	04.	05.	24	männlich 1 ☐ weiblich 2 ☒	ledig 1 ☐ verheiratet 2 ☐ verwitwet 3 ☐ geschieden 4 ☐		

Staatsangehörigkeit	Hauptberuf	1. Nebenberuf	2. Nebenberuf	3. Nebenberuf
A Ungarn	Schülerin			

Wehrdienstverhältnis	T.-Grad	Anzahl Vorstrafen	Gefängnis Monate	Zuchthaus Monate	Eingeliefert in KL.
Ungarn					Auschwitz

Zugangsart	Überstellung an KL.	Häftlings-Nr.	eingesetzt als	Abgangs- Art	Tag	Mon.	Jahr	Heil, Verm. Zu	Ab
E I	Neuengamme	3064	H. Arb.						

Bemerkungen:

Kontrollvermerk: ausgestellt | verschlüsselt | Lochk. geprüft

KL 103/8.44 – 600.000

Exhausted and malnourished survivors get into a truck after being liberated at Woebbelin, one of Neuengamme's 84 satellite camps

© Alamy

Image: Mindu Hornick

age? I imagine even our mother hadn’t seen us undressed – it was terrible.”

After removing their clothes, the girls were then deloused and forced to sit while men cut their hair off, “It was unbelievable because we were just girls in puberty. They took all our hair and we were put in a row where we were given some kind of dress. If you were short like me you’d get a long dress and if you were tall you got a short one although we eventually changed them around. There was also no underwear and we were given wooden clogs.”

The prisoners were then taken to a block that held 1,000 women. Hornick’s first night in Auschwitz was cramped and uncomfortable, “There were eight people sleeping per bed on three tiers that night. There was no room so we had to sit on the floor. There was no water to wash or drink and no sanitation. We must have dozed off when suddenly, at 5.00am, the whistle blew – ‘Raus! Raus!’.”

The fatigued and distressed prisoners were lined up to begin what became a daily ritual of counting, “We again had to come outside our block and stand five in a row. They were constantly counting us and you could stand in these sessions for two to four hours each day. We meant nothing to them so why they wanted to count us so much I don’t know.”

One humiliation that Hornick avoided was the application of a tattoo that reduced each prisoner to a serial number, “When we were given the tattoos we again had to be naked. When I got to the table the fellow got up and they weren’t exactly gentle. Whether his needle broke or he hadn’t got any ink I’m not sure but he said to me, ‘Go to the next table’. I instead walked around the queue because there was such a crowd. All of my family have a number but I haven’t.”

“Humanity was completely lost”

Hornick’s horrific introduction to Auschwitz was the start of approximately six months of imprisonment during late 1943 to spring 1944, “It was beyond words. When you entered you

“THERE IS NO LANGUAGE TO DESCRIBE AUSCHWITZ, IT WAS BEYOND BARBARISM”

thought, ‘Is this the 20th century or the Middle Ages?’. Who could allow such crimes to be committed? There is no language to describe Auschwitz, it was beyond barbarism.”

The complicit actions of the soldiers who ran the camp were shocking, “I often say that Hitler couldn’t have killed all those people. He might have given the orders but it was still up to each individual person to do what they did. The cruelty was unbelievable. For instance, they would tear a child out of a mother’s arms and push the mother through to slave labour. If both the mother and child were screaming they would take the child and smash its head against the wall. What sort of mentality and person can that be? Humanity was completely lost.”

As well as the mass killings, prisoners were forced to work as slave labourers. Hornick and her sister worked in the ‘Kanada’ section, which was an egregious system of organised theft. Prisoners would have their valuables confiscated upon arrival and primarily Jewish labourers were assigned to collect and sift through these items.

Possessions were separated and sorted in large warehouses before being transported back to the Third Reich and even neutral Switzerland, “We were selected to work in Kanada. I don’t know why because it was a privileged job. We had to tear the linings of jackets and coats open to look for valuables. When people were taken from their homes they would put things in linings so that if they survived they would have something to fall back on. This could be things like rings, necklaces, and diamonds, and there were lots of watches. There were boxes where you could separate the watches and necklaces etc. I gather that most of it was sent to Switzerland although it was supposed to have been neutral.”

Hornick might have been working in a relatively privileged position but everyone suffered from deliberate malnutrition that was laced with poisonous intent, “The soup they gave us was made from turnips. It was slimy and all we got was a tiny piece of bread with sawdust in it. A lot of people don’t know that there was also some bromide in it. This was to dull our senses and also to stop all women’s bodily functions such as monthly cycles.”

Despite the hardships, Hornick and her sister helped each other to survive before they discovered relatives in the camp who had also escaped the gas chambers, “With all the tragedies we were lucky because people in Auschwitz survived in pairs. I was first with my sister and then my aunt arrived. She was in Block 14 with two of her teenage daughters and was a very beautiful, tall lady so she was considered good enough for work. She heard we had arrived and came to see us.”

During this reunion, Hornick’s aunt revealed the truth about what happened to the girls’ family, “We were crying because these men had promised that we would see our mother. She had to break it to us that unfortunately we would not see our mother. There were some others who were a little more seasoned that said, ‘Don’t be silly, why are you crying? You see that smoke? She’s possibly up there’. We had never even heard of crematoriums or gas chambers – it didn’t exist in our vocabulary.”

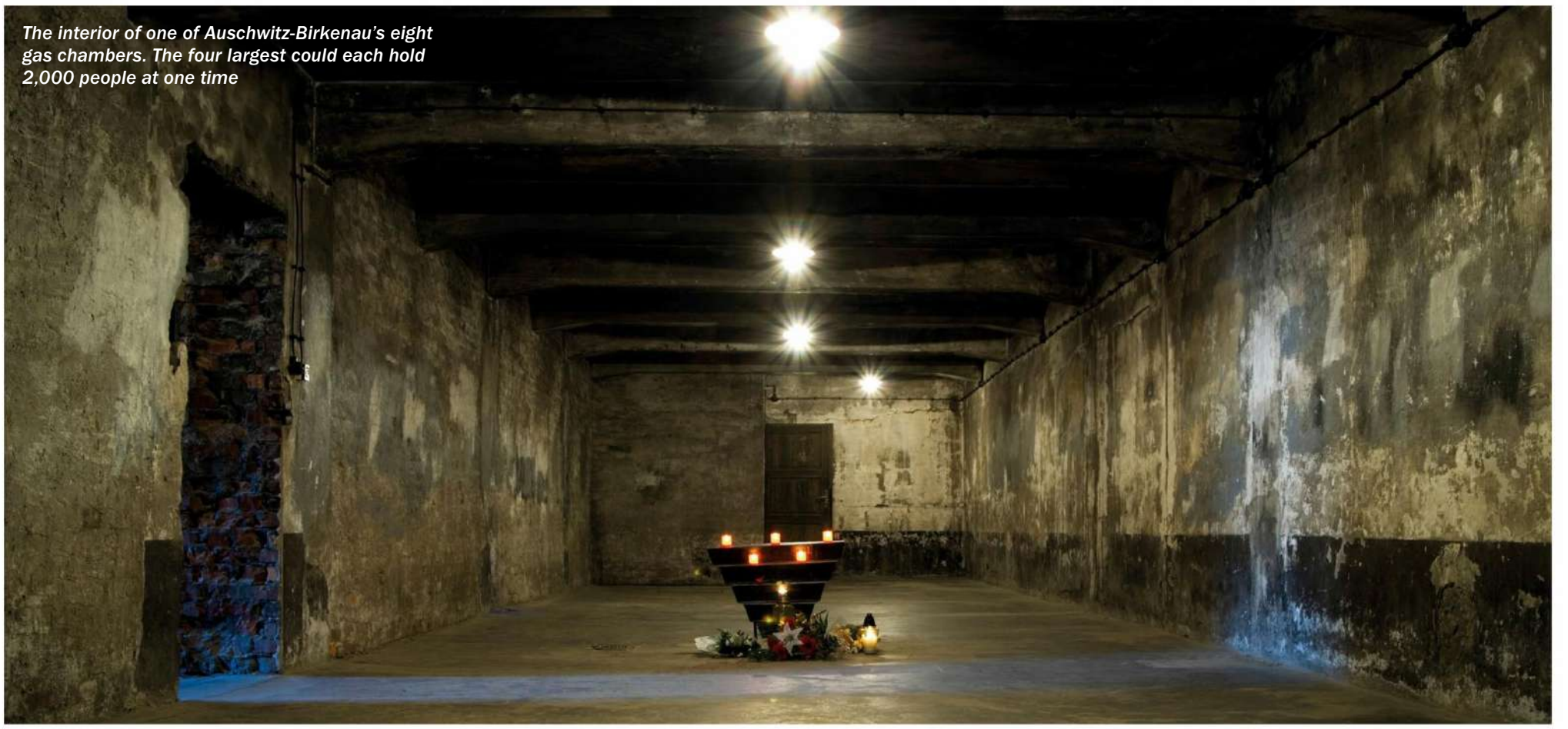
Now reunited, the sisters’ aunt became determined to keep what remained of her family together in the same building, “She said, ‘I’ll see what I can do’. To change two people from one block to another meant that you could be whipped to death. However, we survived because we took care of each other. She managed to take us into her block so we were lucky. Later on, two other cousins came from another town so we were all there with the aunt who kept constantly touching us to be with her.”

© Getty

***Above:** Women deemed fit for work in Auschwitz, May 1944. Hornick, her sister and other female members of her extended family had their hair shaved and were forced to wear lice-ridden, ill-fitting dresses*

***Below:** Women pictured in one of the barrack blocks at Auschwitz, late January 1945. Due to overcrowding, Hornick and her sister had to sleep on the floor during their first night in the camp*

© Getty



The interior of one of Auschwitz-Birkenau's eight gas chambers. The four largest could each hold 2,000 people at one time

© Alamy

Transfer to Germany

After approximately six months, Hornick and her extended family were given an unexpected opportunity to leave Auschwitz, "We were working when my auntie came in and said, 'They're selecting people for work to go out of the camp. We have to see what it is about'. We were put in a row and however which way they could humiliate you, they would. We had to get undressed and they were looking at our muscles while we were naked. Of course we didn't have much muscle but we were nevertheless selected to go on a workforce, although again we didn't know where."

Approximately 500 women and girls were selected before they were assembled near Kanada and given new clothing before they were put on a train. It swiftly returned to Auschwitz after the railway line was bombed and the women spent a tense night sleeping outside the crematorium. They were subsequently put into cattle trucks and this time they were transported to northern Germany.

The prisoners arrived at a huge network of camps that were collectively known as Neuengamme concentration camp. It was the largest of its kind in northwest Germany and although it was administered from Neuengamme, the network consisted of 84 satellite camps. Hornick and her family were taken via Lübberstedt to a camp that was located between Hamburg and Bremen, "Some labourers worked for manufacturers while others worked for local businessmen who wanted cheap labour to assist the German war effort."

The women were put to work in an ammunition factory, "It was hard and we were still woken up early to be counted. The tall girls, including my cousins, were chosen to pour the hot gun solution into containers without any protection. A lot of them developed perforated lungs or went blind from the acidity of the gun solution and our hair even started to turn red. One of my cousins was later in a sanatorium for many years and eventually had to have half her lung removed. However, she's still alive and the only one remaining from my cousins."

Working as part of the war effort meant that the women were allowed marginally better food, "We were always hungry and cold at the camp where we only got a small ration of bread and black coffee. But in the factory canteen we had German soup, which was the only thing they paid for. To this day, I really believe that this one decent soup kept us alive."

Hornick's living conditions were also slightly improved but the women's captors still acted with great brutality, "There was never any petrol so we had to load the ammunition onto lorries and pull them to a railway siding, which was about a mile away. If there was not a railway truck to put the ammunition on we had to put them in bunkers. The work was hard and two of the girls were beaten to death. One said, 'I can't pull this lorry, I'm so ill'. This girl was beaten and left on the floor for everybody to see. The camp women would walk around with sticks and when they started beating somebody they would get into a frenzy from the adrenalin."

Unlike Auschwitz, Neuengamme had Wehrmacht guards alongside the SS, including one reluctant soldier called Willie who subtly assisted the beaten woman, "He was married to an American lady and was visiting his family in Germany when war broke out. He was army-eligible and barred from returning to America so he was like our informant and the only one we ever had. The girls said to him, 'Can we bring her back?' and they managed to bring her back to camp. She was still alive but she died overnight."

Bremen and Hamburg were now being heavily bombed by the Allies nearby and the Germans sheltered the prisoners, "Believe me, we meant nothing to them. They could beat us to death, shoot us and do whatever they wanted but they put us in the bunkers for safety. In spite of it all, the ones who weren't beaten to death or had incurable diseases survived."

"TO THIS DAY, I REALLY BELIEVE THAT THIS ONE DECENT SOUP KEPT US ALIVE"

The death march

By May 1945, the end of the war was approaching, with British forces advancing on Neuengamme, "We noticed that the SS and soldiers were getting very edgy and they suddenly collected us onto a passenger train for the first time. We travelled in the direction of Lübeck with the British on our tail. Himmler had apparently given orders that the camps should be destroyed along with all the prisoners."

The prisoners' train was flanked by SS and Wehrmacht soldiers with machine-guns, which had tragic consequences, "When the British aircraft saw there was a train with guns they thought the Germans were transporting valuable stuff. They attacked, shot the driver and the train stopped. However, in the process they killed about 60 of our girls."

Hornick was caught in the middle of this aerial attack, "I remember my sister was with me and our cousins were in the next carriage. I looked up and there wasn't a roof on the carriage. We broke the doors open, everybody jumped out and we started waving whatever we had. Our cousins also jumped out to see that we were OK. It was a miracle that we weren't killed because our carriage was particularly hit.

"Churchill had ordered the British to take as much of northern Germany as possible because they didn't want the Russians to get in. So there was Himmler giving orders from one side and Churchill from another. The British were starting to be aware of many camps in the area but they were really manic because they were just as scared as everyone else."

After the attack, the Germans regrouped the prisoners and continued marching, "Their loyalty to orders remained unbelievable and we went as far as Plön where they set us by some railway cattle trucks. We had many wounded and sick girls and we were all shocked out of

SCHONFELD'S CHILDREN

Mindu Hornick was one of many young Holocaust survivors who were brought to Britain by a philanthropic rabbi – Dr Solomon Schonfeld

Solomon Schonfeld (1912-84) was the head of an Orthodox Jewish community in London. Before 1939 he procured help from the Home Office to secure visas for German rabbis and synagogue officials to come to Britain with their families. After Kristallnacht, he organised individual 'Kindertransports' for Jewish children and organised their shelter as well as fundraising.

During the war, Schonfeld oversaw the religious welfare of Jews in the British Armed Forces before organising more Kindertransports for children who had survived the Holocaust. He personally travelled to Europe to help survivors and around 1,000 children were rescued in the immediate post-war period.

Hornick was one of those who were able to come to Britain with Schonfeld's help, "My Birmingham uncle visited him in London. Schonfeld said, 'If you can give her a home, I think I have one place left'. I was given a stateless passport and came with the last transport of 150 war orphans out of Eastern Europe. I was very lucky."

Unlike other well-known figures that saved lives during the Holocaust, Schonfeld is less well known but held in high regard by Hornick, "He was a very wonderful man and I met his son last year at an event in London. He was rather upset because he felt that – unlike Sir Nicholas Winton, Oskar Schindler and other people – his father isn't recognised. He did it with hardly any money and very little help from the government. He would approach people and say, 'If you give me £50 (which was then a lot of money), would you sponsor a child?'. He would personally collect the money because people never knew how he managed to hire the boats and trains to bring the children over."

It is estimated that Schonfeld helped approximately 3,500 displaced people, the majority of them children. He was posthumously given the 'British Hero of the Holocaust' award by the UK government in 2013.

***Left:** Hornick's stateless passport that was arranged by Schonfeld for her passage to Britain. Her true date of birth was falsified to make her age appear younger*

Image: Mindu Hornick

Source: Wiki / www.holocaust.co.uk

***Above:** Schonfeld visited Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen in 1946 to help survivors. He wore a self-made military uniform to give the impression that he was an army officer and was accompanied by British soldiers for protection*

"IT IS ESTIMATED THAT SCHONFELD HELPED APPROXIMATELY 3,500 DISPLACED PEOPLE, THE MAJORITY OF THEM CHILDREN"

Right: The Kindertransport statue at Liverpool Street Station, London commemorates the famous rescue journeys of 1938-39 although many transports also took place after the war

Source: Wiki / Paul Simpson

our wits with everything that was going on. We were hungry and terrified.

"The lagerführer (head SS officer) then said, 'We would like to put you on these trucks and hand you over to the Red Cross'. We refused to move and their intention was of course to carry out Himmler's orders to the last minute and blow us up."

Despite their murderous intent, the women's captors finally departed, "The lagerführer eventually came and said, 'We are going into captivity and you are free'. Then the SS left. We were still terrified to move away but it was spring by that time. I think we were eating the grass and some of the leaves from the trees by then. Some of the girls who were a little bit better went and knocked on some houses for water because we were very dehydrated but nobody would open the door to us.

"After two days, we heard that the British were coming. We saw a tank, two Jeeps and two outriders and that was our liberation.

"Those outriders looked just as scared as we were but when they went past our occupation was finished."

Although they had been liberated, the women felt numb, "We weren't dancing for joy because we hadn't got the energy. We felt each other to check that we were still in one piece and we didn't even know how to be glad to be alive. This was because we didn't know what was waiting for us afterwards and who we would discover had survived. In my youthful wisdom, I thought my mother would appear with my two little brothers or that my father would have survived. Unfortunately, none of them had."

The women's survival was even more remarkable because if they had reached the port of Lübeck they would likely have been killed when the British accidentally attacked three ships that were full of concentration camp prisoners. Two of the vessels, SS Cap Arcona and SS Thielbek, were sunk with the loss of over 8,500 lives, "Again, we escaped death. I used to say I survived by sheer luck but now I think it's a miracle."

"People should not forget"

After being liberated, the British oversaw the recovery of Hornick and her fellow survivors by accommodating them in the commandeered coastal resort of Haffkrug.

Her aunt then took the surviving family to Prague where it was discovered that another aunt had survived, "The authorities took us to our auntie's door and she was like an octopus with wanting to hold everybody."

After restarting her education in Prague, they were once again forced to leave in 1948 to escape encroaching Soviet rule. One of Hornick's uncles had joined the Free Czechoslovak Army in England and had settled in Birmingham. The surviving family was forced to split with Hornick moving to England on a stateless passport, while her sister travelled to Australia with another aunt and uncle.

With such upheaval, Hornick was forced to adapt, "You had to carry on. I had such tragedies but I was lucky in that I was still protected by my large family. My aunt and uncle made me so welcome and treated me like one of their own daughters. You felt safe but the biggest tragedy was that I was parted from my sister, although it was only temporary."

Hornick later married, had her own family and ran a successful business with her husband in Birmingham. She now works with schools and the interfaith community to tell her story and to warn about learning the lessons from the Holocaust. A particular emphasis is teaching schoolchildren, "The feedback I receive shows that they have taken a lot of it on board. That is the aim because you've got to educate children. Many teachers tell me that until they have heard an actual survivor they can't believe that the Holocaust could have happened."

In 2018, Hornick was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Worcester and is the recipient of an MBE in recognition of her contribution to Holocaust education. In a climate where extremist politics are advancing across the Western world, she considers Holocaust education to be vital in tackling prejudice, "It worries me terribly because people should not forget. What I went through is still very raw and in my mind it is still there. Never in history have there been such organised factories of death for one group of people to systematically kill another. That is why we survivors have come forward in our advanced years in the hope that this young generation will stand up against it."

"I USED TO SAY I SURVIVED BY SHEER LUCK BUT NOW I THINK IT'S A MIRACLE"

Hornick pictured speaking at an event in Northern Ireland, January 2017. She was awarded an MBE in the 2020 New Year Honours List

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***Above:** A group of child survivors pictured behind a barbed wire fence at Auschwitz on the day of the camp's liberation, 27 January 1945*

***Below:** A secret photograph taken by a prisoner in Auschwitz of a cremation, c.1943*

© Getty

The Anne Frank Trust UK

Anne Frank Trust UK is an education charity that empowers young people to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination. Using Anne Frank's life story and diary as its main inspiration, the Trust partners with schools, local authorities and the criminal justice sector to deliver educational programmes in a variety of settings.

For more information visit:
www.annefrank.org.uk

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STRIDSVAGN M/38 TANK

WORDS **CRAIG MOORE**

Sweden's medium tank was ahead of its time when it was designed in 1937, and influenced similar designs during WWII

DIVER'S VISION
Most tanks in 1938-39 had vision slits cut into the armour plate. The advanced Stridsvagn m/38 tank used optical periscopes and vision ports with armoured covers that were fitted with bulletproof thick glass blocks to protect the driver's eyes.

In the 1930s Sweden realised it needed more modern tanks to defend its neutrality. It had large deposits of iron ore, a resource that the Soviet Union, Germany and Great Britain needed to build weapons such as battleships and tanks.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the biggest threat to Swedish territory came from Great Britain. A proposal was put forward that suggested British troops should occupy northern Sweden to stop iron ore exports to Germany. The 1939 Soviet invasion of Finland, called the Winter War, was used to request permission to send British troops across Norway and Sweden to help Finland. Both Scandinavian governments refused the request as they suspected Britain's real intention. Soon, Germany invaded and occupied Norway to secure access to iron ore shipping ports such as Narvik.

The Stridsvagn m/38 (Strv m/38) tank was designed in 1937 by the German engineer Otto Merker and built by a partly German owned Swedish heavy industry manufacturing company called AB Landsverk. An order for 16 Strv m/38 tanks based on the L-60 tank was placed in July 1937. A total of 216 were built between 1938 and August 1939 (16x m/38, 20x m/39, 100x m/40L and 80x m/40K tanks).

STRIDSVAGN M/38

COMMISSIONED:	1938
ORIGIN:	SWEDEN
LENGTH:	4.80M (15FT 9IN)
RANGE:	270KM (168 MILES)
ENGINE:	SCANIA-VABIS 1664CC I6 OHV 142 BHP (104 KW) PETROL ENGINE
CREW:	3
ARMOUR:	6-15MM
PRIMARY WEAPON:	37MM BOFORS M/38 ANTI-TANK GUN
SECONDARY WEAPON:	SWEDISH MADE BROWNING 8MM KSP M/36 MACHINE-GUN

WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

The Stridsvagn m/38 turret was armed with a 37mm Bofors m/38 anti-tank gun and a coaxial Swedish made Browning 8mm ksp m/36 machine-gun. The main gun could fire armour-piercing rounds, high-explosive shells and white phosphorus incendiary smoke shells.

ARMOUR PROTECTION

The armour thickness ranged from 6mm to 15mm. In 1938 this was comparable with the German Panzer III Ausf.A to D and Soviet T-26 tanks, but the Stridsvagn m/38 tank armour was stronger because it was welded rather than riveted.

SUSPENSION SYSTEM

The Stridsvagn m/38 was the first tank equipped with the revolutionary torsion-bar suspension system. It provided a far smoother and efficient ride over the old leaf springs suspension system.

Illustration: Alex Pang

"THE STRIDSVAGN M/38 (STRV M/38) TANK WAS DESIGNED IN 1937 BY THE GERMAN ENGINEER OTTO MERKER"

The Stridsvagn m/38 was armed with a 37mm Bofors m/38 anti-tank gun and a coaxial Browning 8mm m/36 machine-gun

Image: © The Arsenalen, Swedish Tank Museum

ARMAMENT

The Stridsvagn m/38 was not fitted with a hull machine-gun. It was armed with a 37mm Bofors m/38 anti-tank gun and a coaxial Browning 8mm ksp m/36 machine-gun. The Swedish manufacture Bofors developed the 37mm anti-tank gun for the export market. When it was first sold in 1938, it was an effective weapon that could penetrate the armour of most tanks. A gun-mount was developed to enable it to be fitted inside the Stridsvagn m/38 turret. As tank armour thickness increased, the gun was considered obsolete by 1941.

This is the gunner's position. He could traverse the turret and fire the main gun and coaxial machine gun

Image: © The Arsenalen, Swedish Tank Museum

ENGINE

Between 1932 and 1942, the Swedish car and commercial vehicle manufacturer Scania-Vabis produced a range of haulage trucks. The model 335 was fitted with a Scania-Vabis 1664cc inline-six overhead valve (I6ohv) 142bhp (104kW) petrol engine. This same engine was used to power the Stridsvagn m/38 tank. The engine had already been tested on commercial trucks and found to be reliable. Spare parts were readily available. It was a good idea to use an existing dependable engine, as it cut down development time in producing a new tank.

The Stridsvagn m/38 was powered by a Scania-Vabis 1664cc 142hp engine, which was also used in the Scania-Vabis 335 truck

Each side had a front drive sprocket, four double road wheels, an idler wheel and two return rollers

Image: © The Arsenalen, Swedish Tank Museum

DESIGN

The Stridsvagn m/38 tank was ahead of its time when it left the factory gates at AB Landsverk in 1938. The Swedish designers, under the direction of the German chief engineer Otto Merker, fitted a torsion-bar suspension system. It was revolutionary for the time. This system would be used on German tanks like the Panther and Tiger. It provided a smoother ride than the traditional leaf springs suspension system. The hull armour was stronger than other tanks because it was welded, not riveted.

The armoured engine compartment was at the rear of the tank. The large hatch helped the crew access the engine

Image: © The Arsenalen, Swedish Tank Museum

Stridsvagn m/38 tank commanders had access to a radio in the rear of the turret

CREW COMPARTMENT

The Stridsvagn m/38 tank had a crew of three. The driver sat on the left side of the tank. He had good vision compared to other tanks developed in the late 1930s. He had three periscopes and three vision ports with armoured covers. Thick glass blocks protected the driver from eye injury. The large hatch above his head slid sideways to open and did not obstruct the turret. The commander was over-worked having to load the gun, operate the radio, find targets, look for threats and navigate.

The driver controlled the direction of the tank by moving the two levers with wooden handles

Image: © The Arsenalen, Swedish Tank Museum

SERVICE HISTORY

In 1936 the Swedish Army wanted to field two full strength tank battalions to enable it to defend the country from attack. They had observed other countries rearming. They were particularly aware of what was happening in Germany. The Swedish Government refused to allocate funds for two tank battalions and only financed one tank battalion. This consisted of 16 Stridsvagn m/38 medium tanks and 48 Stridsvagn m/37 light tanks that were only armed with two 8mm m/36 machine-guns. The more numerous Stridsvagn m/37 light tanks would be used in a scout role, searching out enemy paratroopers and infantry. If they encountered enemy tanks, they would withdraw and keep observation while calling in artillery fire and support from the Stridsvagn m/38 medium tanks. The Stridsvagn m/38, and the upgraded m/39, m/40L, m/40K versions, were only tanks that could knock-out enemy armoured vehicles until new tanks arrived in 1941.

A Stridsvagn m/38 parades through Stockholm

Source: Wiki / PD

The tank hull armour was welded rather than riveted, making it stronger

Image: © The Arsenalen, Swedish Tank Museum

THE VEHICLE PICTURED IS A STRIDSVAGN M/38 BELONGING TO ARSENALEN TANK MUSEUM

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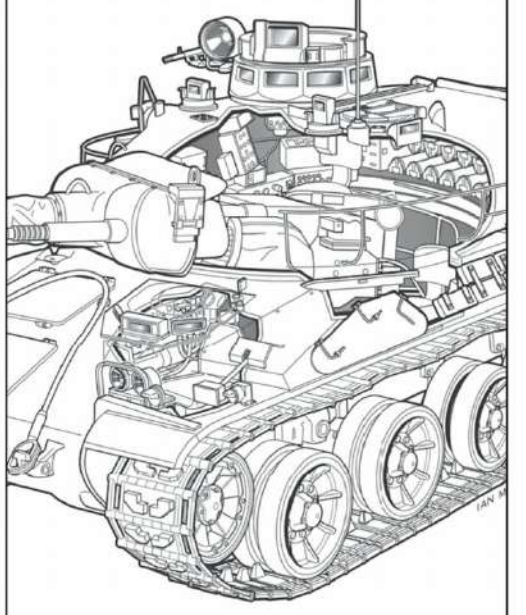

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WAGENBURG
THE HUSSITE WAR WAGON

Each wagon was manned by two handgunners and six crossbowmen, who fired through small slit holes, protected by foot soldiers stationed outside

Facing the combined might of the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church, the ingenious leader of the 15th century Hussite revolt created the Medieval world's very own tank

In 1419, four years after the renegade preacher Jan Hus was burned at the stake, his followers, the Hussites, found themselves at war with the combined might of the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church. Despite inferior numbers, training and equipment, they endured five successive crusades before succumbing to infighting. With an army largely consisting of peasants and farmers, their very survival depended on finding a way to stop the mounted knights in their tracks. They found their answer in the form of the 'Wagenburg', or 'Wagon Fort' – the Medieval world's very own tank.

The strategy was devised by the one-eyed Hussite leader, Jan Žižka, a former captain of the Bohemian King Wenceslas's palace guard, who had also fought as a mercenary against the Teutonic Knights in Poland. In the winter of 1419, while Žižka was besieging Nekmer Castle, he was attacked by a far larger royalist army. Desperate, Žižka tried something new, chaining seven wagons together between two lakes, reinforced with large guns. As the royalists charged towards them, unable to break through the wagon line and shocked by the Hussite gunfire, they were decimated.

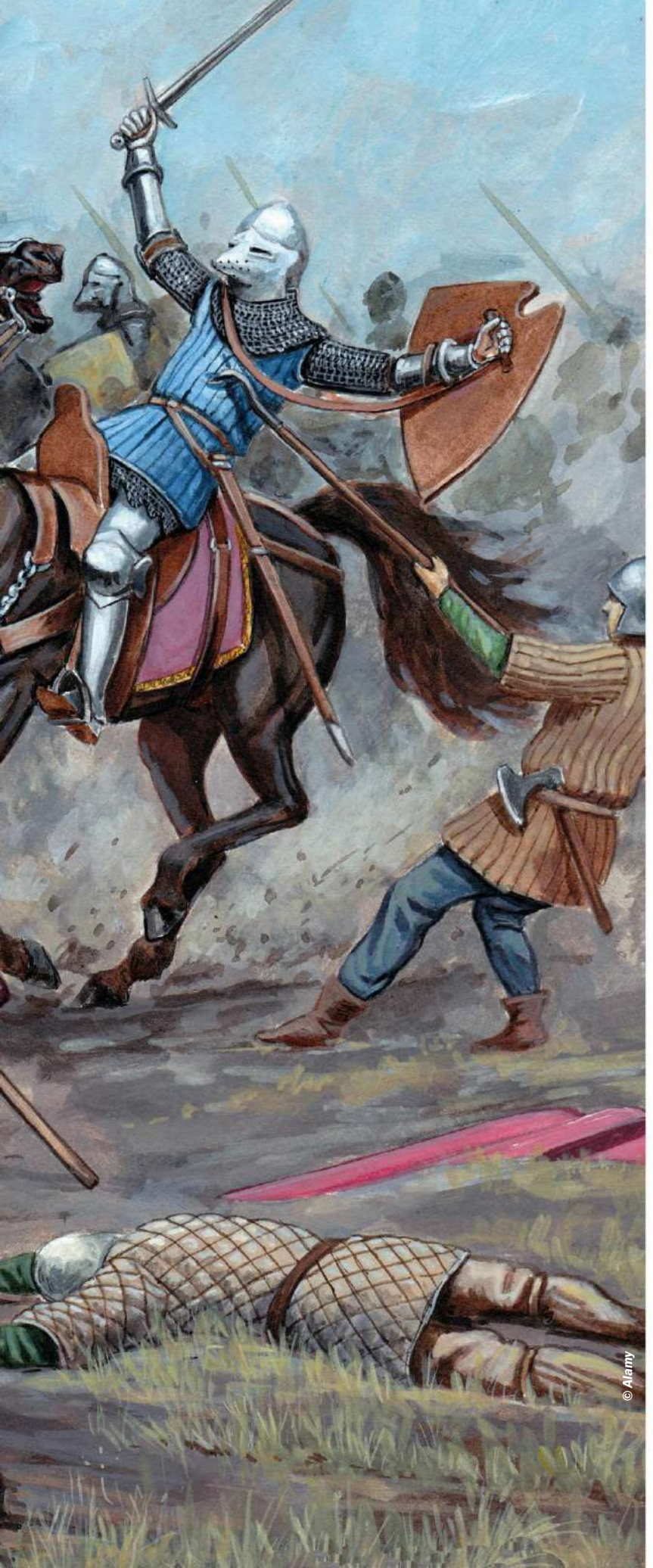
Until now, wagons had long served as supply carts, and had even been used to enclose camps or field headquarters. At the Battle of Mohi in 1241, the Hungarian King Bela had drawn up a defensive ring of wagons to fortify his camp against the Mongols, only to be slaughtered. However, using them as mobile defensive fortifications on the battlefield, as Žižka had, was unique. Žižka was also an early adopter of the firearm, utilising 'pipe guns', consisting of short iron tubes attached to long wooden shafts – weapons the Czechs called pistala. As the wars progressed, he introduced increasingly large guns, the most ingenious of which was the 'houfnice', or 'howitzer', designed to mow down attacking troops. This heavy artillery consisted of a short, wide barrel, mounted atop an axel and wheels.

In 1421, as the royalists wrought terror on the Czech populace, Žižka found himself surrounded by Emperor Sigismund's army within the city of Kutná Hora. Facing destruction, he gambled on his own genius – mounting his guns atop wagons and using them to punch a hole in the enemy's line, in among the first documented uses of field artillery. Between his guns and war wagons, Žižka had essentially built the Medieval tank, an impregnable moving fortress of destruction. While only seven war wagons were used in their first deployment at Nekmer, this soon swelled to 180 – paired with 35 large guns.

With most of his followers hailing from agricultural backgrounds, Žižka had plenty of four-wheeled farm carts to draw upon. These were reinforced with thick layers of planks, pressed alongside one another and filled with soldiers, to create mobile forts. Further heavy planks were bound by rope and dropped over the left hand side as additional armour, with small triangular holes from which guns and crossbows could be mounted and fired. On the right-hand side, a narrow door dropped out into a ramp, to allow the crew easy access.

Each wagon was stocked with a crate of throwing stones, two axes, two pickaxes, two hoes, two shovels and two spades. A bucket was hung between the wheels, to water the horses or put out fires, and wagons carrying artillery would also bear shot and powder. While two handgunners and six crossbowmen would be stationed inside, they were protected outside by 14 flailmen and four halberdiers, as well as two pavisiers, who set up shields to protect any gaps in the line.

Each wagon had its own commander, placed into groups of ten, with a linesman commanding up to 100 wagons each, led by a captain responsible for all of the wagons.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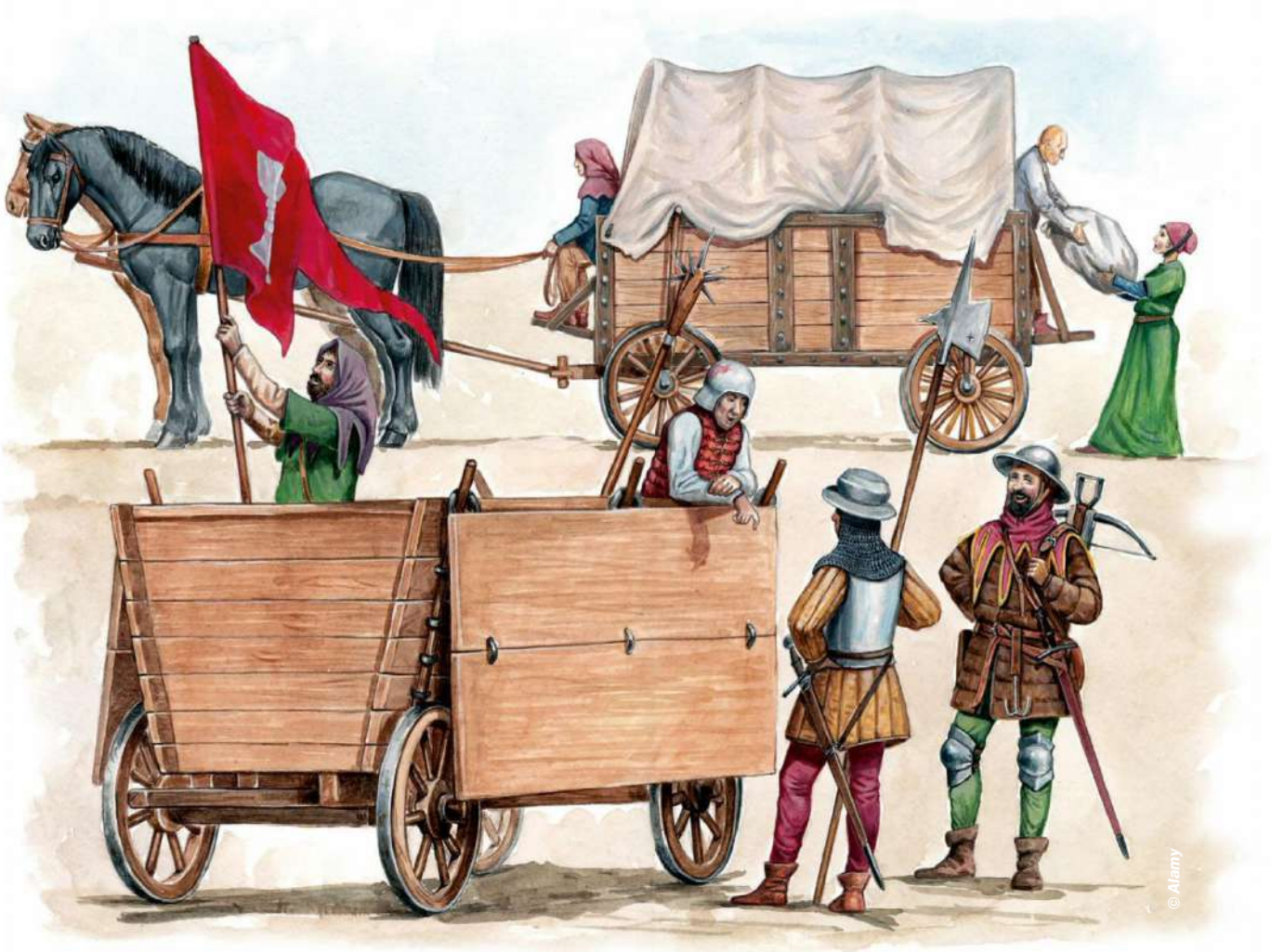
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The Hussites fought under the image of a chalice – a reference to Jan Hus's belief that during Communion, all participants should partake of the wine

THE HUSSITE WARS

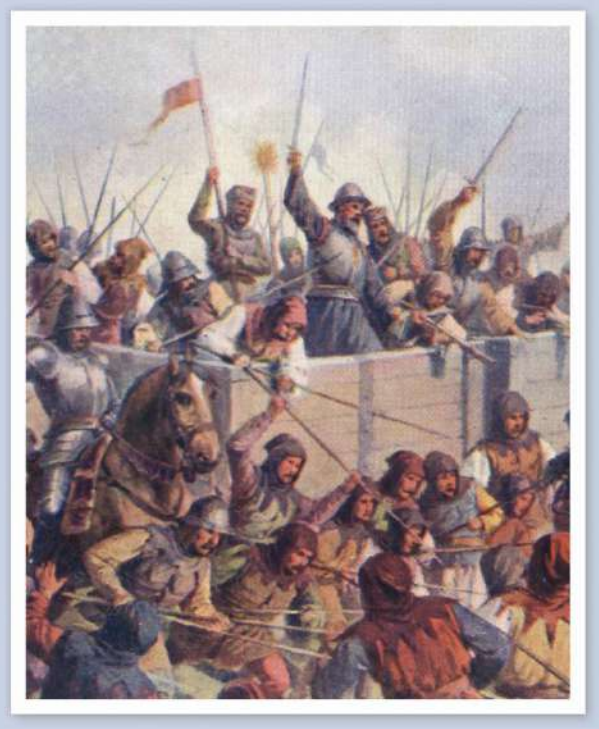
As the Czech majority grew tired of their oppressive German overlords, and the Catholic church, Bohemia erupted into full-blown religious revolt

In 15th-century Bohemia, part of the Holy Roman Empire, years of oppressive rule by the German minority led to a rise in Czech nationalism, coupled with resentment for the materialist nature of the Catholic clergy. Amid a papal schism, the reformist preacher Jan Hus found fertile ground for his calls to abolish the payment of indulgences. However, despite being promised safe passage, he was arrested and burned at the stake as a heretic. In the aftermath, King Wenceslas of Bohemia ejected Hus's followers from most of the churches in Prague.

Stoked by the priest, Jan Želivsky, the Hussites rose up in revolt, breaking into the town hall and hurling councillors from windows, onto spears. Wenceslas died soon after, and his brother, Emperor Sigismund found himself at war. Despite securing freedom of worship for the Hussites in Prague, Jan Žižka found that his Taborite faction was too extreme for the populace, and moved to Pilsen, and then Tabor.

Along the way, the Catholic church called a crusade against the 'heretical' sect. However, thanks to Žižka's strategic genius, the Hussites endured five successive crusades, before finally succumbing to infighting between the extremist Taborites and moderate Utraquists. Though the Hussite revolt was quashed, the Utraquists not only established an independent church, but were championed by the Utraquist pacifist, King George of Kunštát and Podebrady.

After the Battle of Lipany, although Bohemia was reunited with the Catholic Church, the Utraquists won the right to establish an independent church



Source: Wiki / Josef Mathauser

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***Above:** As war erupted, the Hussites were led by the one-eyed military genius Jan Žižka, until his death in 1425*

Signal flags were used at the front and back of the lines to communicate movements. As they approached the battlefield, wagons were moved into tight formation, creating a defensive perimeter, at which point the horses were unbound and wagon shafts removed – raised vertically or placed against the preceding vehicle. They were then chained to one another, and their protective panels released. Shovels might even be used to dig a ditch around the lines, and the soil thrown over the wheels. Then, Hussite gunners, crossbowmen and artillery would target enemy knights, wearing them down before releasing their own cavalry for a decisive shock attack.

Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, called Žižka's army a "many-armed monster which unexpectedly and quickly seizes its prey, squeezes it to death and swallows up its pieces". Describing the war wagon process, he said, "The mounted troops fought outside the wagon stronghold, but moved back into it whenever the enemy threatened to overpower them, and they then fought dismounted as if from the walls of a fortified city."

During the fifth crusade, the war wagon had become so renowned that when the crusaders laid siege to Domazlice in 1431, they brought their own. However, when the Hussites approached to relieve the town, a breakdown in communication triggered a general rout, as the crusader commander frantically tried to throw together a wagon fort. With haste, the Hussites smashed through crusader lines before their wagenburg was closed off – scoring their greatest ever haul of booty, including Cardinal Cesarini's hat.

Three years later, the extremist faction of Hussites was dealt a brutal defeat by an alliance of moderates, Czech nobles and Prague townsmen – who set up war wagons in a long formation atop a hill. Under a cloud of artillery smoke, they feigned a retreat, drawing the radicals in, before snapping the fort shut – so they could trample and hack them down at their leisure. After 17 years of bloodshed, the battle ushered in the end of the Hussite Wars, reuniting Bohemia with the Catholic church, and earning the moderate Hussites the freedom to practice their faith. Though the wagenburg would not become a staple of European warfare, field artillery and guns would. The cavalry would finally be killed off centuries later, with the introduction of the tank – in many ways, a compact version of the wagon fort.

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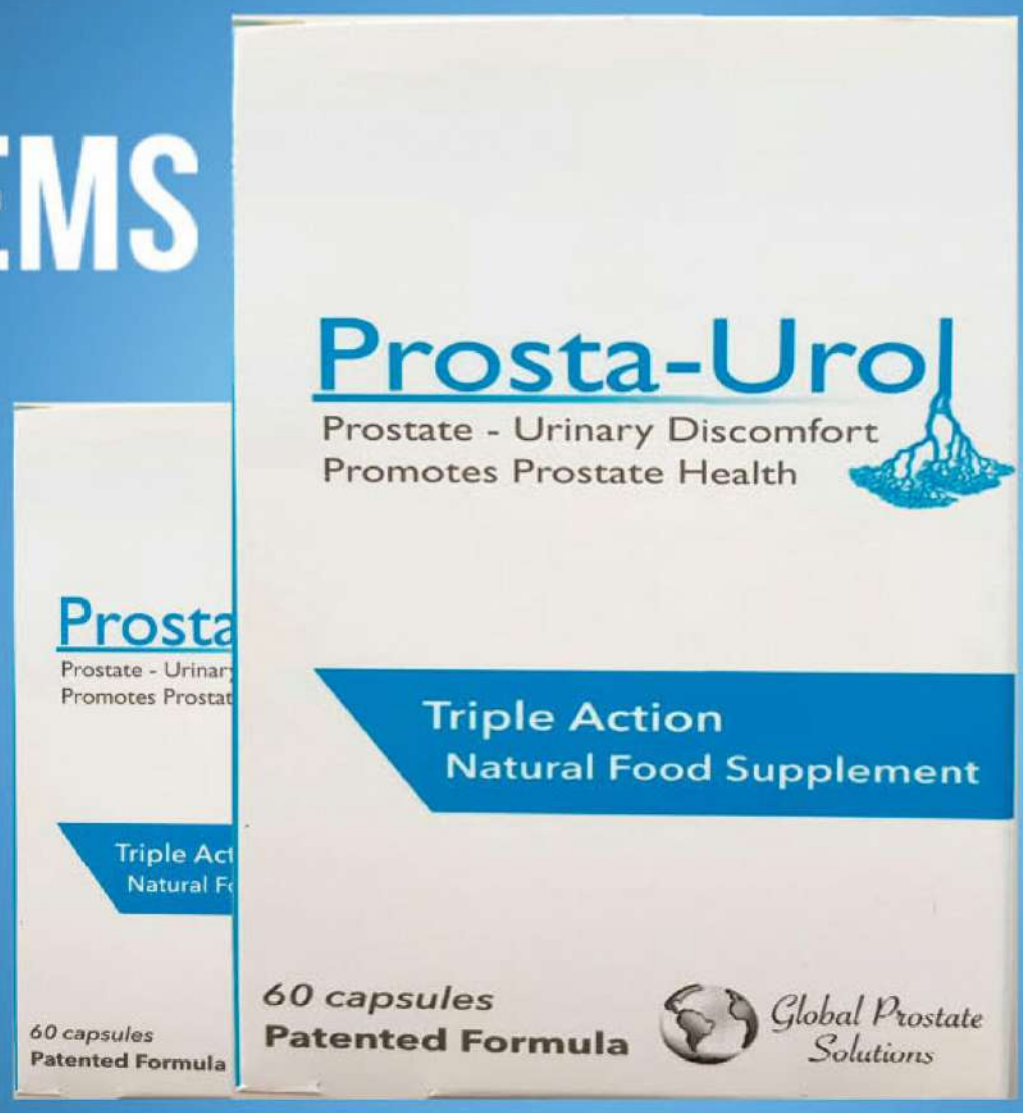

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THE SIEGE OF LUCKNOW

One of the great sieges of the empire, the battle for Lucknow became a symbol of British resolve during the Indian Mutiny

WORDS **MARK SIMNER**

OPPOSING FORCES

LUCKNOW GARRISON

LEADERS
Sir Henry Lawrence and John Inglis

BRITISH INFANTRY
585

BRITISH OFFICERS OF MUTINIED REGIMENTS
100

EUROPEAN ARTILLERY
89 (men)

LOYAL SEPOYS/INDIAN SERVANTS
765

CIVILIANS
153 (including women and children)

HAVELOCK'S FIRST RELIEF ATTEMPT

LEADERS
Sir Henry Havelock

EUROPEAN
1,403

INDIAN
560

ARTILLERY
8 (guns)

FIRST RELIEF

LEADERS
Sir Henry Havelock and Sir James Outram

EUROPEAN INFANTRY
2,388

EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER CAVALRY
109

EUROPEAN ARTILLERY
282 (men)

SIKH INFANTRY
341

NATIVE CAVALRY
59

SECOND RELIEF

LEADERS
Sir Colin Campbell

FIGHTING MEN
4,700

ARTILLERY
49 guns and mortars

VS

REBELS & MUTINEERS

LEADERS
No Unified Command

INFANTRY/CAVALRY/ ARTILLERY
30,000 men (at peak)

Source: Wiki/J. R. Skelton

LUCKNOW, INDIA 30 MAY-27 NOVEMBER 1857

The city of Lucknow, located on the west bank of the Gumti River some 42 miles east of Cawnpore, was the capital of Oude province. The province itself had been annexed by the British East India Company only the year before the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, after which and the incumbent ruler, Wajid Ali, was exiled to Calcutta. This caused much resentment among both the people of Oude and the local sepoy army. The subsequent arrival of the insensitive Coverley Jackson as chief commissioner of the province only further inflamed what was already a fragile situation. Long before the mutiny broke out, Lucknow was a hotbed of discontent.

Jackson would later be replaced by Sir Henry Lawrence, a man who possessed far greater understanding of the peoples of India and acted with much sensitivity towards them. During his time in the Punjab he had won the respect of many Sikhs – had time

"LONG BEFORE THE MUTINY BROKE OUT, LUCKNOW WAS A HOTBED OF DISCONTENT"

been available, he may well have diffused the tensions at Lucknow. As it was, his appointment came a mere six weeks before the commencement of the mutiny.

Nevertheless, this sensitivity served Lawrence well. He observed with great concern the growing discontent within the ranks of Lucknow's garrison, principally made up of the 13th, 58th and 71st Native Infantry (NI). Rumours also reached Lawrence that disaffection within the 7th Irregular Cavalry had reached boiling point, and so on 3 May he took with him a force of British soldiers from Her Majesty's 32nd Regiment of Foot, some loyal sepoys and a battery of artillery to the cavalry's barracks to disarm the dissenters. It was a timely intervention, but unfortunately there was little he could have done to prevent the looming bloodshed.

The siege

News reached Lucknow of the mutinous events at Meerut and Delhi on 16 May. Lawrence immediately set about fortifying the chief commissioner's house – known as 'the Residency' – the compound measuring some 2,150 feet by 1,200 feet. Windows were blocked up, trenches dug, and outlaying

Illustration of British soldiers fighting their way through the streets at the Siege of Lucknow

structures demolished to give clear fields of fire. Into this fortified position Lawrence ordered all men of 32nd Regiment of Foot and their families, all Eurasians and the sick. The Machi Bhawan, a fortress containing vital supplies, was also strengthened, its defence entrusted to a company of the 32nd with 30 guns.

As Lawrence made these preparations, much of Lucknow and Oude came under the effective control of mutinous rebels. On the night of 31 May, the 71st NI mutinied and burned down their bungalows. Lawrence responded by ordering the 48th NI and 7th Light Cavalry to pursue these rebels, but large numbers of his sepoys and sowars simply deserted – many also decided to throw in their lot with the mutineers. Even members of the local police mutinied on 11/12 June. If this wasn't enough, news came on the 28 June that Cawnpore had fallen to the rebels and hopes of help faded.

Several days later, on 30 June, Lawrence became aware of a menacing rebel force gathering north of the city. A reconnaissance in force was ordered, which the commissioner decided to lead personally. When the two opposing forces clashed, more sepoys on the British side deserted, some even taking artillery with them. Unfortunately for Lawrence, he was forced to retreat to the safety of the Residency, having lost 118 European officers and men killed and 54 wounded, while a further 128 loyal Indian sepoys were killed and 11 wounded. The siege of Lucknow had begun.

The defenders of the Residency consisted of 535 men of the 32nd, 50 of the 84th, 89 European artillerymen, 100 British officers from Indian regiments that had mutinied, and

"HIS DEATH CAST A GREAT SHADOW OVER THE GARRISON, AND AT SUCH A TIME WAS MOST DEPRESSING TO ALL CONCERNED"

765 loyal Indian sepoys, or servants. With them were 153 civilians, including women and children. It was not much to defend against an enemy force that would eventually number a staggering 30,000.

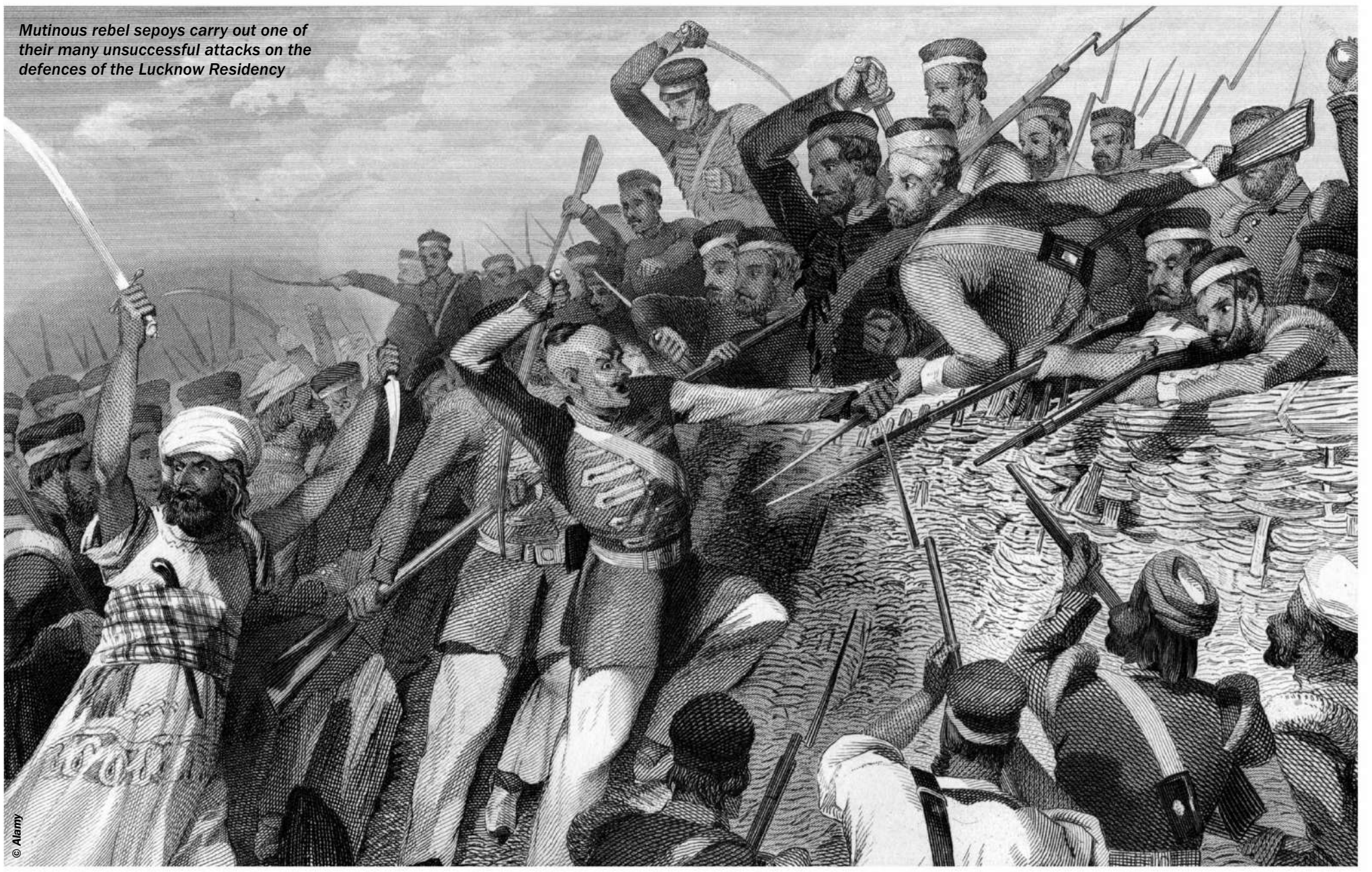
It would not be long before the Residency came under attack. An endless bombardment on 1 July resulted in an award of the Victoria Cross to Corporal William Oxenham of the 32nd, who while under intense enemy fire, saved a civilian trapped under a roof that had collapsed during the shelling. On the same day, Lawrence was hit by rebel artillery fire, and although he managed to cling to life for three days, he would eventually succumb to his wounds. His death was a serious blow to the garrison. Ensign John Ruggles recalled the low mood, "His death cast a great shadow over the garrison, and at such a time was most depressing to all concerned … His uprightness, unselfishness, and genial affectionate nature made us all feel that we had indeed lost a friend, and that in [a] time of great need."

Lawrence was replaced by Major John Banks as civil commissioner, while Colonel John Inglis assumed military command. Banks would later be shot dead, after which full responsibility for the defence rested on a heavily burdened Inglis. Over the coming weeks the rebels would launch several major assaults. Although these attacks proved unsuccessful, British losses steadily mounted, with an average of 15 casualties per day during the first week alone. There were frequent false warnings of imminent rebel assaults, which themselves became a constant cause of distress. Mrs Katherine Bartrum remembered, "There would come the cry of all lights out; the children would cry at being in the dark and the women would be trembling in fear lest the enemy attack proved successful and the sepoys should get in."

A rebel attempt to dig a mine under the defences was detected and thwarted while several sorties against rebel artillery were successfully carried out. Several Victoria Crosses were awarded for these dangerous sorties, including those to Captain Samuel Lawrence and Private William Dowling of the 32nd, who bravely managed to spike and even capture some enemy artillery.

Havelock's failed attempt

Fortunately for the defenders, relief was on its way. Inglis, on 22 July, was able to send a messenger to Major-General Sir Henry Havelock, who had retaken Cawnpore, "Our defences are straggling, and our numerical strength quite inadequate to man them. Our artillery is weak, and the casualties heavy." The messenger made it back to Inglis bearing a reply from Colonel Fraser-Tytler, Havelock's deputy assistant quartermaster general "in five or six days we shall meet". Inglis now knew help was on its way.



Mutinous rebel sepoys carry out one of their many unsuccessful attacks on the defences of the Lucknow Residency

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Sir Henry Havelock's men enter Lucknow on 25 September 1857 after bitter street fighting and close-quarter combat

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Despite his considerable efforts, including inflicting a heavy defeat on the rebels at Unnao (29 July and 4 August) and at Bithur (16 August), the force available to Havelock was simply too weak to fight its way through to Lucknow and was forced to retire. He prepared for another relief attempt but would be succeeded by Major-General Sir James Outram, who arrived at Cawnpore with additional men, including the 90th Light Infantry, on 16 September. Nevertheless, Outram told Havelock he could have the honour of completing the relief of Lucknow.

Havelock now had 3,179 men for his next relief attempt. His force would be split into two infantry brigades and an artillery brigade, as well as a small force of cavalry. The 1st Brigade was commanded by Brigadier-General James Neill, and consisted of the Madras Fusiliers, the 5th Foot, the 84th Foot and two companies of 64th Foot. The 2nd Brigade would be commanded by Brigadier-General Walter Hamilton and included the 78th Highlanders, 90th Foot and Brayser's Sikhs.

The First Relief

The relief force commenced its advance on the 18 September, driving the rebels out of Alambagh, four miles to the south of Lucknow's Residency, five days later. On 25 September, an advance on the Residency itself was made but the recent poor weather had made the march difficult, the boggy ground heavily waterlogged or completely flooded in places.

Nevertheless, Havelock pushed on, violently clashing with a strong rebel force while crossing the Char Bagh canal bridge, before eventually fighting his way through to the Machi Bhawan. When the advance resumed, Havelock's men found themselves encountering bitter resistance as they desperately fought their way through the narrow lanes leading to the Residency. During the savage fighting, Neill was killed, and the relief force as a whole suffered 196 killed and 535 wounded. Inglis, who like many had heard the fighting creeping closer to the Residency, joyfully recalled, "At 6.00pm tremendous cheering was heard, and it was known our relief had reached us."

The jubilant cheers would not last for long. Outram's plan had been to evacuate Lucknow to Cawnpore, but because

Major-General Sir Henry Havelock, who twice attempted to fight his way to and relieve the beleaguered garrison at Lucknow

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05 STORMING OF SIKANDAR BAGH

Restricted by the narrow village lanes, Campbell's men come under devastating fire as they approach the fortified Sikandar Bagh. So devastating was the rebel fusillade, Campbell was forced to bring up heavy 18-pounder guns to within a mere 60-yards to silence his enemy. Some 2,000 rebels are killed.

06 STORMING THE SHAH NAJAF

While the fight for Sikander Bagh rages, Brigadier-General Adrian Hope leads a detachment of troops against the heavily defended Shah Najaf. The rebels rain musket fire and grape shot onto Hope's men from the Kaisar Bagh and batteries across the Gumti River. It is taken only after heavy British casualties.

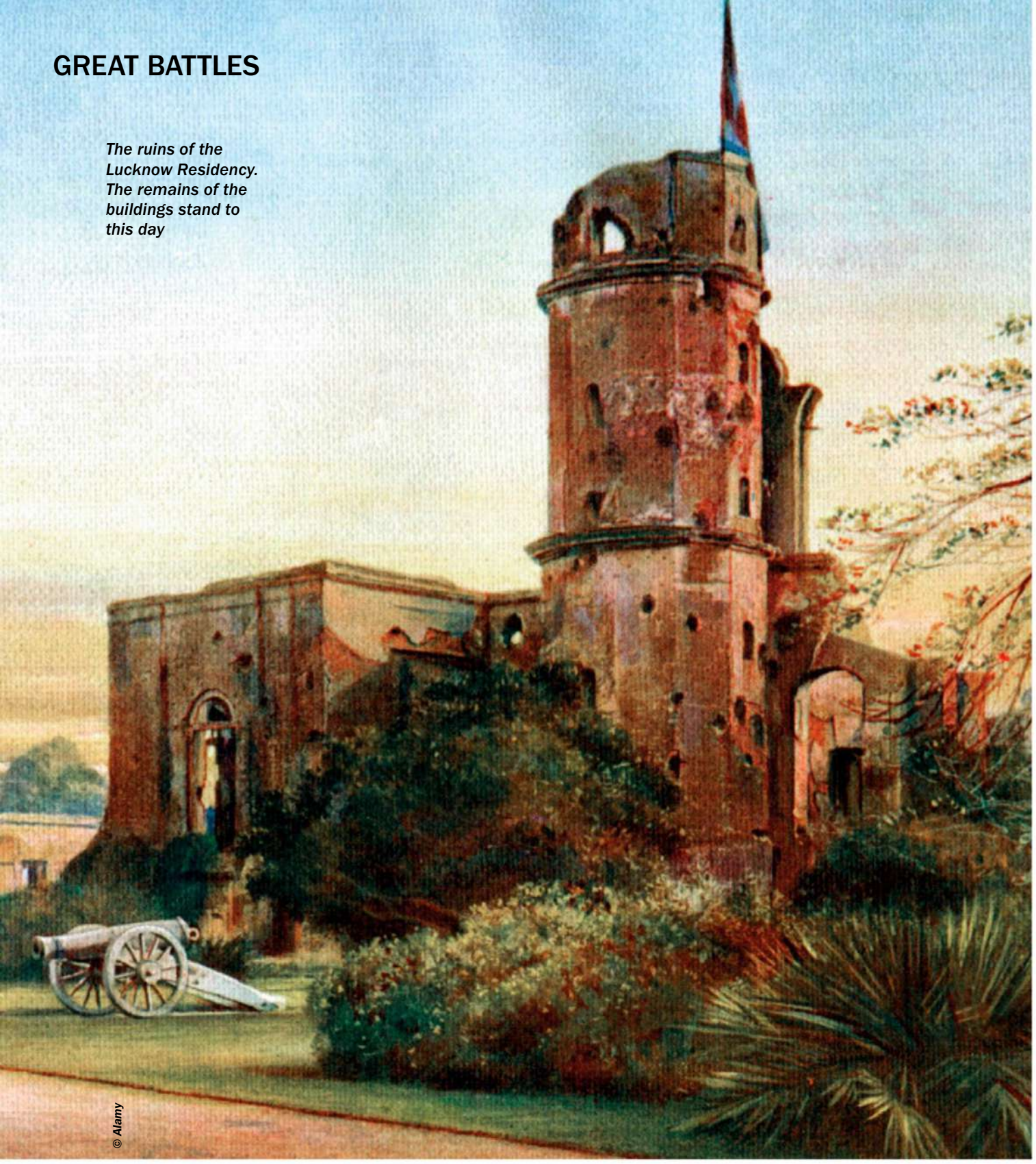
07 WOLSELEY TAKES THE MOTI MAHAL

After taking the mess house with relative ease, Captain Garnet Wolseley acts against orders and successfully assaults the Moti Mahal. An enraged Campbell admonishes the captain "how dare you attack the Moti Mahal without instructions?" but later promises to promote him in recognition of his bravery.

08 SCREENS ERECTED TO HIDE WITHDRAWAL

With the Residency finally relieved, Campbell, who is concerned with the defence of Cawnpore, decides to evacuate. In order to prevent the rebels viewing the withdrawal of troops and civilians, he erects several screens to hide the retirement before spiking the remaining guns. Lucknow is completely abandoned by 27 November.

Map: Rocio Espin



The ruins of the Lucknow Residency. The remains of the buildings stand to this day

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Sir Colin Campbell finally relieves the Residency at Lucknow on 19 November 1857

© Alamy

his own force had suffered so many casualties it was now deemed impractical to withdraw. However, as a stroke of luck, a store of Lawrence's forgotten supplies was found in the Residency, making a continued defence seem possible. The relieving force now also provided much needed reinforcements, and what has been termed the second siege began, this time under Outram's command.

The Second Relief

While the siege of Lucknow and the first relief attempt had been playing out, Sir Colin Campbell had arrived from England in July to take command of the Bengal Army. By October, he was pushing his way up the Grand Trunk Road, reaching Cawnpore on 3 November. Campbell then turned his attention to relieving Lucknow, which had by now become viewed as a symbol of British resolve during the ongoing mutiny.

Campbell's relief force departed for Lucknow on the 14 November and marched for Dilkusha Kothi. From here he intended to advance to La Martinière school, near where he would cross the canal, thus avoiding the bridge at Char Bagh which had cost Havelock so dearly. He also wanted to keep his supply lines back to Alambagh secure, and so the advance would be made in a methodical manner, securing key positions along the route. As Campbell's force approached the city, he also planned to take the Sikandar Bagh, a villa within a walled enclosure, from which he would make the final push to relieve the Residency.

Having observed British troops scouting the line of the canal between Char Bagh and Dilkusha, the rebels assumed Campbell would cross the waterway somewhere between the two. As such, they dammed the canal to hinder the crossing, but this merely drained the canal at the actual point where Campbell intended to cross, making the crossing even easier and without effective opposition.

When the British approached the Sikandar Bagh it was found to be heavily defended. The walls had been loopholed and the road leading to it blocked. As Campbell's advanced guard, consisting of a battery of Royal Artillery and a company of the 53rd Foot, approached, it came under an intense fire from three sides, forcing the soldiers to seek what cover they could find. Thomas Kavanagh of the Bengal Civil Service, who was accompanying Campbell's force, recalled, "A terrific fire of musketry poured from the high walls as some of the 53rd… reached the angle of the garden facing the river. The first man who attempted to pass under it was severely wounded in the hip, and lay with bullets ploughing the earth around him."

Campbell took up position on some higher ground to better observe the enemy position. A bullet suddenly killed a nearby gunner before striking Campbell on his thigh. Fortunately for the commander-in-chief, the bullet was spent and caused little more than a nasty bruise.

An unperturbed Campbell then issued instructions for some of his heavy guns and a howitzer be brought up to concentrate their fire on a part of the wall around the Sikandar Bagh in order to effect a breach.

The guns roared into action and eventually a small opening in the outer wall was made. Campbell waved his cap to signal the advance of the infantry, the 4th Punjabis leading the way closely followed by the 93rd. There has been some debate as to who got to the breach first. However, Frederick Roberts later recalled, "A Highlander was the first to reach the goal, and was shot dead as he entered the enclosure; a man of the 4th Punjab Infantry came next and met the same fate … A drummer-boy of the 93rd must have been one of the first to pass that grim boundary between life and death, for when I got in I found him just inside the breach, lying back quite dead – a pretty, innocent-looking, fair-haired lad, not more than 14 years of age."

Punjabis and Highlanders, the latter with frenzied shouts of "Remember Cawnpore!", now poured into the Sikandar Bagh and delivered volleys of deadly musket fire into the startled defenders. Their muskets empty, Campbell's men went at the mutinous sepoys with their bayonets, showing little mercy in the brutal

close-quarter combat that ensued. Soon the Sikandar Bagh was firmly in British hands and an estimated 2,000 rebels lay dead, strewn across the enclosure.

Campbell was delighted at the capture of the Sikandar Bagh, but he quickly turned his sights to the Shah Najaf, a large mosque and mausoleum of the first King of Oude. Enclosed by a 20 feet high stone wall, the mosque had also been loopholed. Wasting no time, Campbell ordered his artillery to commence shelling some rebels who had taken up positions in buildings and gardens east of the Shah Najaf, while others were cleared by men of the 90th led by Captain Garnet Wolseley, one of Britain's most famous future generals.

The British subjected the defenders of the Shah Najaf to a devastating fire of cannon and musket, relentlessly pounding the stone walls for more than three hours. Despite the heavy cannonade, the walls stubbornly failed to give way and the rebels kept up a sharp return fire of their own. Several assaults were made on the mosque, but they were beaten off as British casualties became increasingly heavy.

Watching the attack was Corporal William Forbes-Mitchell of the 93rd, "They [British troops] advanced bravely to the breach… there were no scaling ladders, and the wall was still almost 20 feet high… men were raked with a perfect hail of missiles – grenades and round shot hurled from wall pieces, arrows and brickbats, burning torches of rags and cotton saturated with oil – even boiling water was dashed on them!"

"THE BRITISH SUBJECTED THE DEFENDERS OF THE SHAH NAJAF TO A DEVASTATING FIRE OF CANNON AND MUSKET"

Having been unable to breach the defences of the Shah Najaf, 50 men of the 93rd were sent off to see if they could find another entrance into the mosque's enclosure. A small breach was found and some sappers were ordered up to make it wider. Finally entering the enclosure, the Highlanders suddenly dashed across the courtyard to open the main gate, through which the British assault force charged in. The Shah Najaf now fell to a delighted Campbell.

The Residency relieved

All that now remained between Campbell's force and the Residency was the mess house and the Moti Mahal (the 'Pearl Palace'). The former was bombarded by artillery and mortars before Wolseley and his men stormed the position. Rushing in, Wolseley was able to capture the Mess House without suffering any casualties, a fact that encouraged him to push on for the Moti Mahal, although his orders limited him to taking and holding the mess house. The Moti Mahal soon fell albeit only after a hard fight. There would be pockets of continued resistance from the rebels, but Campbell's men lost no time mopping them up. The Residency had finally been relieved.

Both Outram and Havelock wanted to launch an assault of the Kaisar Bagh to secure Lucknow, but Campbell was more concerned with protecting Cawnpore. He ordered Lucknow to be evacuated of all Europeans and loyal Indians. The withdrawal was made on 19 November, while British artillery shelled the Kaisar Bagh to make the rebels believe it was about to be assaulted. Leaving Outram with a force of 4,000 men at Alambagh, Campbell safely reached Cawnpore on 27 November. Havelock, however, was to succumb to dysentery on 24 November, dying in the knowledge he had fulfilled his promise of relieving the defenders of Lucknow.

The two sieges of Lucknow had lasted 87 and 61 days respectively and cost the British around 2,500 casualties. Rebel casualties are unknown but likely number in their thousands. Abandoned to the rebels, Lucknow remained in the hands of the mutineers until March 1858, when Campbell returned and recaptured the city for the last time.

JAMES MAGENNIS

On 31 July 1945, the Japanese cruiser Takao sat at anchor in Singapore dockyard. Little did her crew know that beneath the surface, this Royal Navy diver placed the magnetic mines that would take her out of the war

WORDS **MURRAY DAHM**

The Takao-class heavy cruiser had been a threat to US and allied forces throughout the Pacific War. It had been in action since 1941 and participated in many engagements, sinking enemy shipping and supporting landings and evacuations. It had also survived several engagements where many Japanese ships had been sunk. With the sinking of her three sister ships, Atago, Maya and Chokai in late 1944, Takao, although damaged, remained a major threat in the theatre.

As the Allied armies advanced towards Singapore, the Takao needed to be dealt with. The Royal Navy launched Operation Struggle on 31 July 1945, to do just that.

The operation used midget submarines, HMS XE3 assigned to deal with the Takao and HMS XE1 the Myoko, another heavy cruiser in Singapore dockyard. The XE midget submarines had a crew of four: C/O, deputy, ERA (Engine Room Artificer) and a seaman, and at least one was a qualified diver. On the XE3, the diver was Acting Leading-Seaman James Joseph Magennis. British midget submarines had proven their worth against the Tirpitz in Norway in September 1943 and the XE series improved in the original design. The XE3 carried two, two-ton Amatol side charges and six limpet mines which would be attached to the hull of the target by the diver. The midget submarines were towed some of the way to Singapore by S-class submarines and then made their way independently through the Strait of Johore and into Singapore dockyard. The journey took 13 hours and at various points the Japanese defenders came within metres of spotting the XE3. The Takao was camouflaged and took some time to locate. Unknown to the XE3, the commander of the XE1, Lieutenant John Smart, decided that it was too risky to travel the further two miles into the harbour to reach the Myoko and so he decided to target the Takao as well, dropping his Amatol charges beneath her hull.

"DESPITE HIS EXHAUSTION, HIS OXYGEN LEAK AND THE FACT THAT THERE WAS EVERY PROBABILITY OF HIS BEING SIGHTED, MAGENNIS AT ONCE VOLUNTEERED TO LEAVE THE CRAFT AND FREE THE CARRIER RATHER THAN ALLOW A LESS EXPERIENCED DIVER TO UNDERTAKE THE JOB"

London Gazette

James Magennis (the surname can also be found spelled 'McGinnes' and he was called both 'Jim' and 'Mick' in the Navy) was born in the poor neighbourhood of West Belfast in 1919. In 1934, Magennis's older brother, Bill, joined the Royal Navy and in 1935 James followed him, enlisting as a 15-year-old boy recruit. He had attempted to enlist in the army but was told he was too poorly educated. Magennis trained at the HMS Ganges at Shotley, overlooking Harwich for nine months before joining the fleet. As a first class boy he served on the battleship Royal Sovereign, the cruisers Dauntless and Enterprise, and then the aircraft carrier Hermes. When war broke out Magennis was assigned to the destroyer HMS Kandahar, serving in the North Sea and Mediterranean before it struck a mine in December 1941. In 1942 Magennis was drafted to HMS Defiance torpedo school in Devonport intended to serve on the new cruiser HMS Belfast. Before that, however, he was drafted into the submarine service, training at HMS Dolphin at Gosport. He then joined H50 in February 1943. In March Magennis volunteered to join the special service in the new X-craft. He trained in Scotland at the shore base HMS Varbell, there learning to dive. He then took part in Operation Source, the attack on the Tirpitz by X-craft, serving on X7 – he was mentioned in despatches for his conduct in this mission.

In 1944 Magennis was chosen for service on a new XE series of midget submarines,

Both James Magennis (left) and his C/O Ian Fraser (inset) received the Victoria Cross for the raid against the Takao

Source: Wiki / IWM

"STAND BY TO GET UNDER WAY AND I HOPE THE LUCK OF THE IRISH IS WITH US. UP PERISCOPE"

Lieutenant Ian Fraser, C/O of XE3

© TopFoto

which would be going into operation against Japan. Unusually Magennis was chosen as the diver, a job usually reserved for officers. Training for the new craft took place in summer 1944, at the same time as the D-Day landings, and lasted six months.

Divers were trained in wire-cutting to make a hole for the X-craft to pass through as well as the placement of limpet mines. When training was complete, the new craft and crews sailed for the Pacific via the Azores, Trinidad, the Panama Canal, Hawaii and Brisbane before reaching Sydney. There they prepared for action, hoping that the war was not already considered won.

The cruiser Takao was reached by XE3 at about 7.00am on 1 August. The crew had travelled all night without sleep and through 80 miles of mined enemy waters. C/O Frasaer dived his midget submarine to the bottom of the harbour and Magennis took the opportunity for a short sleep.

The crew also took Benzedrine tablets so that they would feel refreshed when the boat returned to periscope depth. They passed Changi prison and hoped the boom across the strait would be up, otherwise Magennis would need to cut a hole through it. They were in luck and the boom was raised. They moved forward, narrowly avoiding being spotted by a troop-ship. Magennis began the arduous process of suiting up in the cramped

"HIS CHEST FAIRLY HEAVED AS HE PANTED FOR BREATH IN THE OXYGEN-SCARCE ATMOSPHERE OF THE BOAT AND THE MUSCLES OF HIS ARMS GLEAMING AND RIPPLED AS HE PULLED THE TIGHT RUBBER NECK PIECE UP UNDER HIS ARMS."

Lieutenant Ian Fraser, C/O of XE3

conditions of the submarine. XE3 had been submerged for seven hours.

C/O Fraser put the XE3 on the bottom amidship of the Takao with only a foot of clearance above her to the keel of the heavy cruiser. Magennis entered the wet and dry compartment of the submarine and flooded it, ready for his dive. He found, however, that the hatch would not open all the way as it struck the keel of the Takao before it was fully open. Magennis, showing remarkable bravery and ingenuity, removed his breathing apparatus and squeezed through the gap and then replaced his breathing apparatus. The water was very murky and visibility was poor.

The hull of the Takao was covered in barnacles and seaweed. Magennis would have to clear six spaces for the midget submarine's limpet mines; he found that their magnets would not hold to the hull without a clean surface and they kept sliding off. Magennis returned to the submarine, removed his breathing apparatus again and squeezed back in. Finding some rope aboard, he repeated his arduous procedure back out to the hull of the Takao. The squeeze was tighter this time owing to the falling tide.

Once back under the Takao, Magennis used the rope to clear a space for each mine. In doing so he cut his hands and his suit on the razor-sharp barnacles, causing his suit to leak, oxygen bubbles rising from it to the surface. He later estimated that he spent at least 45 minutes placing the mines. Magennis placed them in pairs, one on each side of the keel. His return to the XE3 was even more difficult than his second exit but he managed to squeeze in a final time.

C/O Fraser later marvelled at the number of firsts Magennis had achieved: he was the first diver to remove and reattach his breathing apparatus, the first Royal Navy diver to place mines on an enemy ship, the first to leave

The heavy cruiser Takao looked "as big as a bloody battleship" according to C/O Fraser

A midget submarine XE-8, of the British Royal Navy, travels up the Thames River, 1952

© Alamy

Source: Wiki / IJN

and return, and leave again. Fraser now found he had difficulties of his own; the falling tide meant the XE3 was all but wedged against the sea bottom and the Takao's keel. Fraser was only able to free the submarine by blowing his ballast tanks and therefore surfacing momentarily. He then released both of the submarine's Amatol explosive charges. One of the Amatol carriers, however, did not detach following this and had become flooded with water, making it impossible for the submarine to move. Fraser intended to dive to release the carrier manually but Magennis was still in his diving gear and asked that he be allowed (as the diver) to go – he just needed five minutes to get his breath back. They waited and Magennis went out again and released the flooded carrier with a spanner. This took seven minutes and Magennis risked being spotted at any moment. Eventually the carrier fell away, allowing the submarine to escape. It was still not safe, however, and had to race the tide to reach the open sea again through the same 80 miles of mined enemy seaway. The XE3 reached open sea at 9.00pm that night. When they reached the HM/SM Stygian again at 11.50pm they had been operating for 52 hours without a break.

The crew of the Stygian reported a huge explosion at 9.30pm and they XE3 crew later learned that the XE1 had dropped its Amatol under the Takao too (although they had not placed any mines). The explosives tore a 60-foot hole in the hull and put the Takao's guns out of action. Plans for XE3 to return and sink the Myoko were made but Japan's surrender on 15 August made that mission unnecessary.

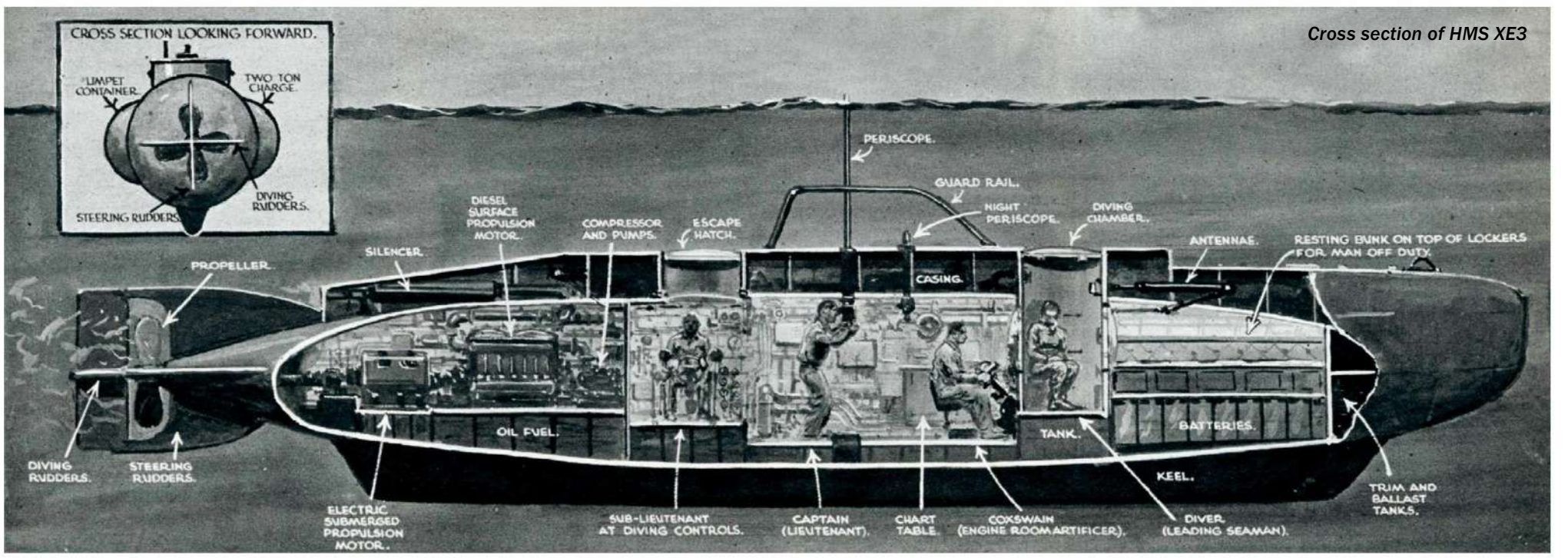
James Magennis was the first junior rating from the submarine service to be honoured with a Victoria Cross. Only two other junior ratings received Britain's highest military honour during the Second World War, but both of those citations were posthumous. In addition to Magennis's Victoria Cross, his commanding officer, Lieutenant Ian Fraser, also received the Victoria Cross (and later wrote *Frogman VC* in 1957); the XE3 Deputy, Sub-Lieutenant William 'Kiwi' Smith received the DSO, and the ERA, Alfred Reed, received the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. The crew of the XE1 received DSOs and DSMs.

The limelight into which Magennis was thrust was completely unexpected. He was feted in Sydney and flown home especially on a Sunderland Flying Boat. The flight took them to Singapore where the hulk of the Takao and the Myoko were being used to hold Japanese prisoners. However, it did not take long for the political and religious divisions in Northern Ireland. To make mileage out of Magennis's medal, he was turned into both a political and religious pariah. This began even before Magennis had received his medal (at Buckingham Palace on 15 December). He was welcomed in Belfast in late 1945 but the welcome was short lived. As a boy recruit in 1935, Magennis still had four years of service left (he would need to enlist for a further ten if he wanted a pension). He demobilised in 1949 but by then had been demoted (due to drunkenness and a period in detention). He returned to Belfast but suffered ill-health and by 1952 was broke. He sold his medal for £75.

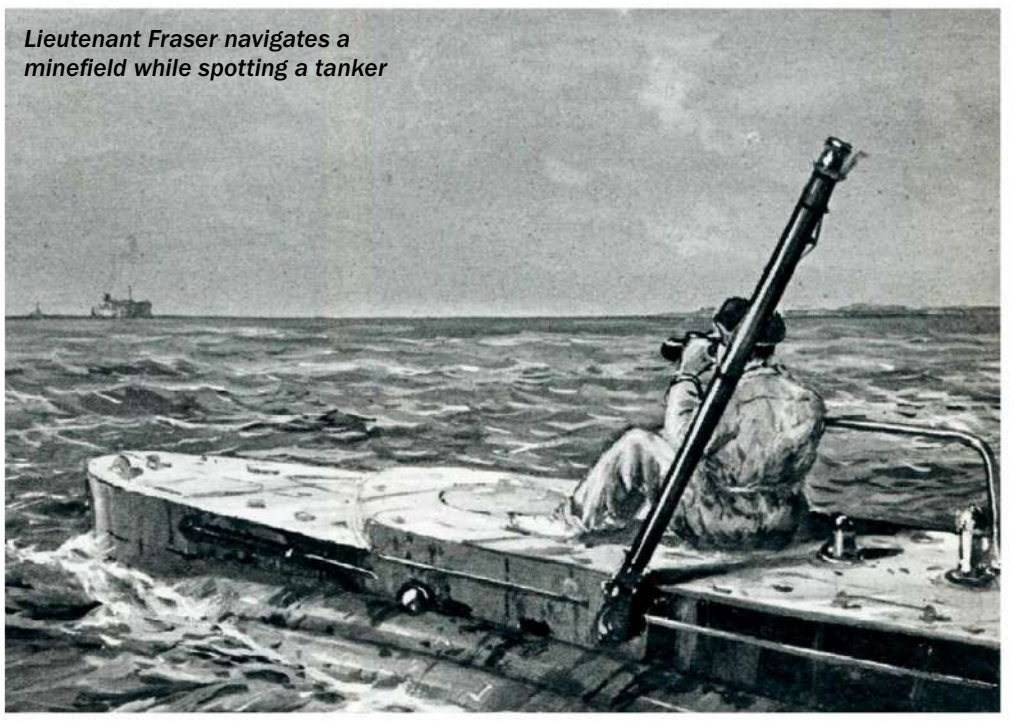
Marmaduke Furness, Viscount Furness discovered the circumstances of the sale and bought it back for him (although Magennis being returned his Victoria Cross was turned into a humiliating news story). This event seems to have cemented the idea for Magennis to leave Belfast and Ireland permanently. As a Roman Catholic, Magennis was shunned in Belfast after WWII; the city did not appreciate a British war hero and Magennis moved to Doncaster and then Bradford.

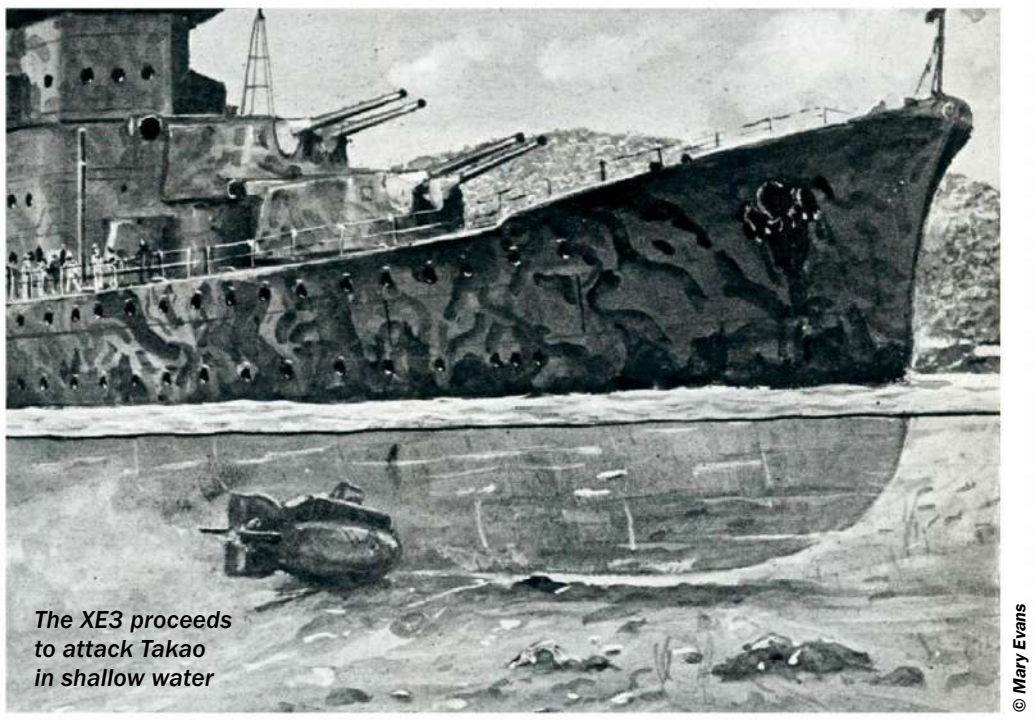
His status as the first Northern Irish Victoria Cross recipient was ignored for many years although he was honoured in Bradford. The Magennis Victoria Cross was also the first purchased by Lord Ashcroft in 1986, soon after Magennis's death from bronchitis at the age of 65. A plaque commemorating his home was finally erected in Belfast in 1998 and a memorial statue erected in Belfast in 1999.

On that occasion his former commanding officer, Ian Fraser, remarked, "I have never met a braver man."



Cross section of HMS XE3


Lieutenant Fraser navigates a minefield while spotting a tanker


The XE3 proceeds to attack Takao in shallow water

© Mary Evans

NOW THIS IS SPARTA!

Hailed as the city-state that birthed antiquity's most fearsome fighters, Sparta inspired more than just fear, leaving behind a legacy of governance, architecture and military techniques that would shape the ancient world

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MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Discover an American WWII battleship at the Imperial War Museum, a striking painting depicting the Bosnian War and a tiny museum dedicated to a huge medieval battle

A view of 'Battleship Row' with smoke pouring from USS Arizona in the foreground and USS West Virginia and USS Tennessee in the background

ARIZONA IN LONDON

The Imperial War Museum has been donated a piece of a US Navy battleship that was sunk during the attack on Pearl Harbor

On the morning of 7 December 1941, Japanese aircraft attacked the US naval base at Pearl Harbor on Oahu, Hawaii. Their intention was to destroy as much of the US Pacific Fleet as possible before it could respond to Japanese operations against British, Dutch and American territories in southeast Asia. In the first five minutes of the attack, four battleships were hit, including USS Arizona. Its ammunition stores exploded within minutes after bombs penetrated the armoured deck, which ripped the battleship apart. 1,777 of the ship's crew were killed and fierce fires burned for days before she sank.

Although many damaged ships at Pearl Harbor were eventually returned to active service, the Arizona was beyond repair and she was not recovered from the sea. The site of the shipwreck is now a memorial to those who were killed in the attacks and is annually visited by thousands of people.

In a unique gesture, the IWM will be displaying the first piece of the wreckage to leave the USA in the museum's new Second World War and Holocaust Galleries. Opening in 2021 at IWM London, the galleries are a digitally-enabled learning suite that will put Britain's experience of WWII in a global context and explore the international nature of the conflict. Personal stories from both sides of the Atlantic will highlight the strong Anglo-American alliance that contributed significantly to victory in the war.

The donated piece of USS Arizona was salvaged from the wreckage when the memorial was built in 1961. Vicki Hawkins, curator for the new IWM Second World War Galleries says, "Telling the story of the USS Arizona through this exciting new acquisition will help us convey to our visitors the huge impact and significance of the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor and the immediate devastation it caused. It will set the scene for visitors to explore the hugely important role that the US would go on to play in WWII, particularly in Asia and the Pacific."

Jim Neuman, historian for Commander Navy Region Hawaii also states, "The USS Arizona Relics Programme was established to provide portions of the salvaged wreckage for display in over 100 locations around the country, giving people who have never been to Hawaii, or perhaps will never make it there, a chance to see an actual piece of the USS Arizona. We are thrilled to be able to provide a piece to the Imperial War Museum. The relic pieces are a visible reminder of the global nature of WWII, the story of USS Arizona and the USA's entry into the war. They will provide an even wider context for discussion of the significance of WWII to visitors of the IWM."

The piece of the USS Arizona that will go on display at the IWM's new Second World War Galleries from 2021

A concept image of the IWM's digitally-enabled Second World War Galleries

Images courtesy of IWM

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EVENTS AT THE IWM VISIT: WWW.IWM.ORG.UK

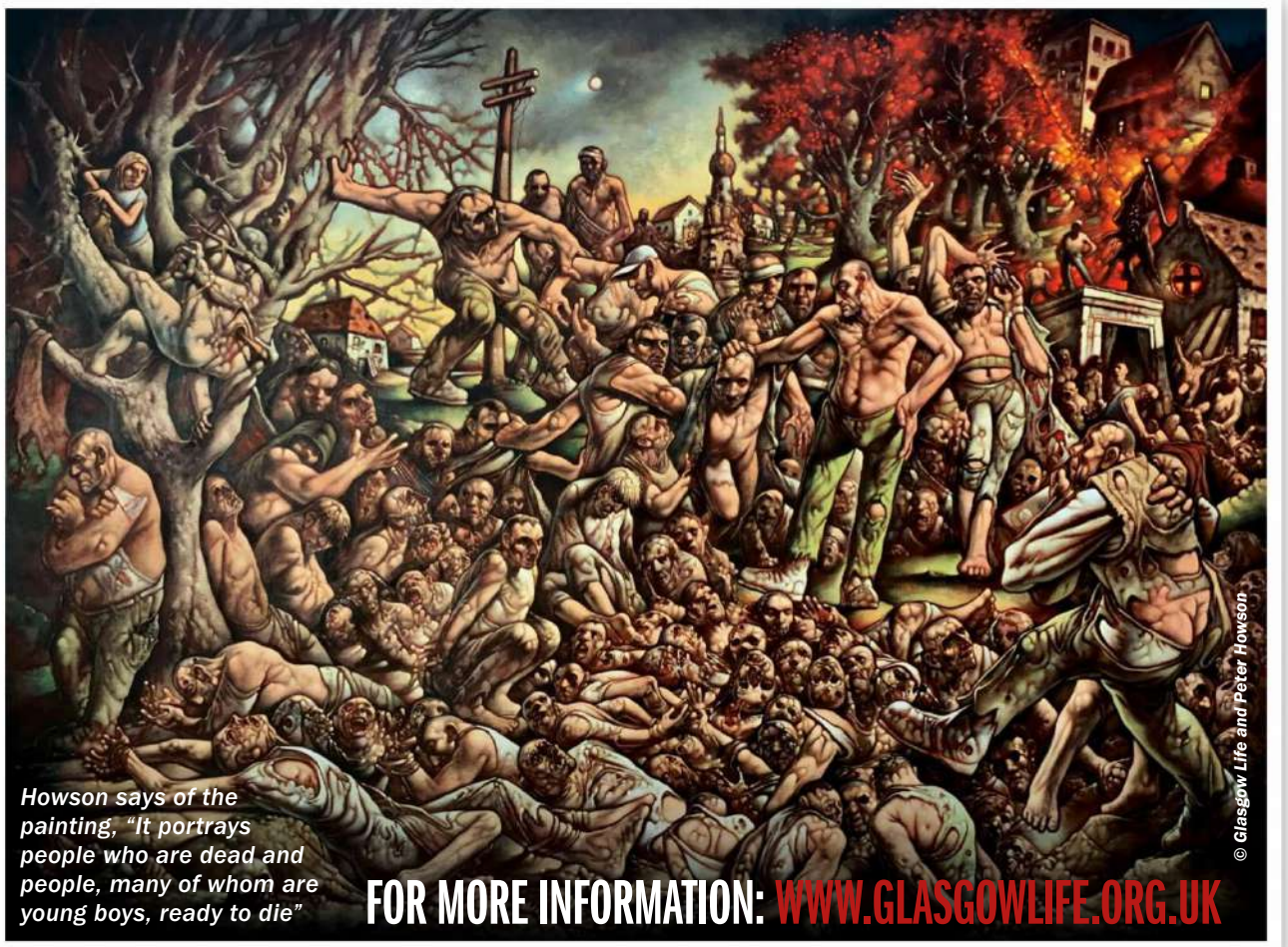
GLASGOW'S SREBRENICA TRIBUTE

War artist Peter Howson OBE has unveiled a new painting that depicts a key event of the Bosnian War

The Srebrenica Massacre was the most heinous war crime on European soil since WWII when over 8,000 Muslim Bosniaks (mostly men and boys) were killed by the Bosnian Serb Army of Republika Srpska in July 1995. A witness to this appalling event was Peter Howson who was then the official British war artist during the Bosnian War. He has now unveiled a new artwork at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow about the killings.

The Massacre of Srebrenica is a large-scale painting that portrays the religious and ethnic conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. It is on loan to Glasgow Museums for an initial three-year period with Howson creating the piece specifically for St Mungo to commemorate the forthcoming 25th anniversary of the massacre.

The debut of the painting is part of a wider programme of commemorations across Glasgow and beyond in 2020 to commemorate Srebrenica. Howson, who is regarded as one of his generation's leading figurative painters says, "It is difficult to put into words the horror of the massacre of over 8,000 men and boys in Srebrenica. I was there as a war artist during this time and witnessed what I can only describe as hell on earth. I still have memories too painful to talk about, but I find that painting these terrible events helps me to try and understand why we do such evil things to each other. This painting records a moment in European history; a memory in my mind's eye of what happened that day."



Howson says of the painting, "It portrays people who are dead and people, many of whom are young boys, ready to die"

© Glasgow Life and Peter Howson

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.GLASGOWLIFE.ORG.UK

TOWTON'S PUB MUSEUM

One of the Wars of the Roses' most decisive battles has a visitor information centre in a cosy Yorkshire tavern

© Alamy

© Alamy

***Left:** The Towton Cross was erected in 1939 to commemorate the battle. The cross is possibly the only surviving relic of a lost chantry chapel that was built by Richard III*

***Above:** The Crooked Billet is located on the road to Towton near Saxton*

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: WWW.TOWTON.ORG.UK

Involving possibly more than 50,000 men and resulting in perhaps as many as 28,000 fatalities, the Battle of Towton was probably the largest and bloodiest battle fought in England. Taking place on 29 March 1461 between Yorkist and Lancastrian forces during the Wars of the Roses, Towton was a decisive Yorkist victory that affirmed Edward IV's right to rule England and drove his rival Henry VI into exile.

The custodians of the battle's memory are the Towton Battlefield Society (TBS). Comprising of enthusiastic volunteers, the society's objectives are to preserve the battle site for the general public and to promote education and research into the period. A key part of the TBS's work is the maintenance of a visitor information centre in the grounds of the Crooked Billet Inn near Saxton. The village is close to the battlefield with some of the dead being buried All Saints Church.

The information centre is open to the public on request free of charge and displays information on the battle and local area. There are also replica artefacts from the period and information about the TBS.

Walking guides over the battlefield can be arranged for organised groups and visitors can receive information from the TBS or the staff of the Crooked Billet.

WWII THIS MONTH...

FEBRUARY 1940

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, every issue **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place each month of the conflict

SECOND BATTLE OF SUMMA

After failing to make a breakthrough against the Finnish defensive line, known as the Mannerheim Line, the Soviets launched a second massive offensive across the Karelian Isthmus, near the village of Summa. On 1 February, over 300,000 artillery shells heralded the attack, with around 600,000 troops attacking across the narrow isthmus. This offensive would eventually break the Finnish defences, and the Winter War ended the following month.

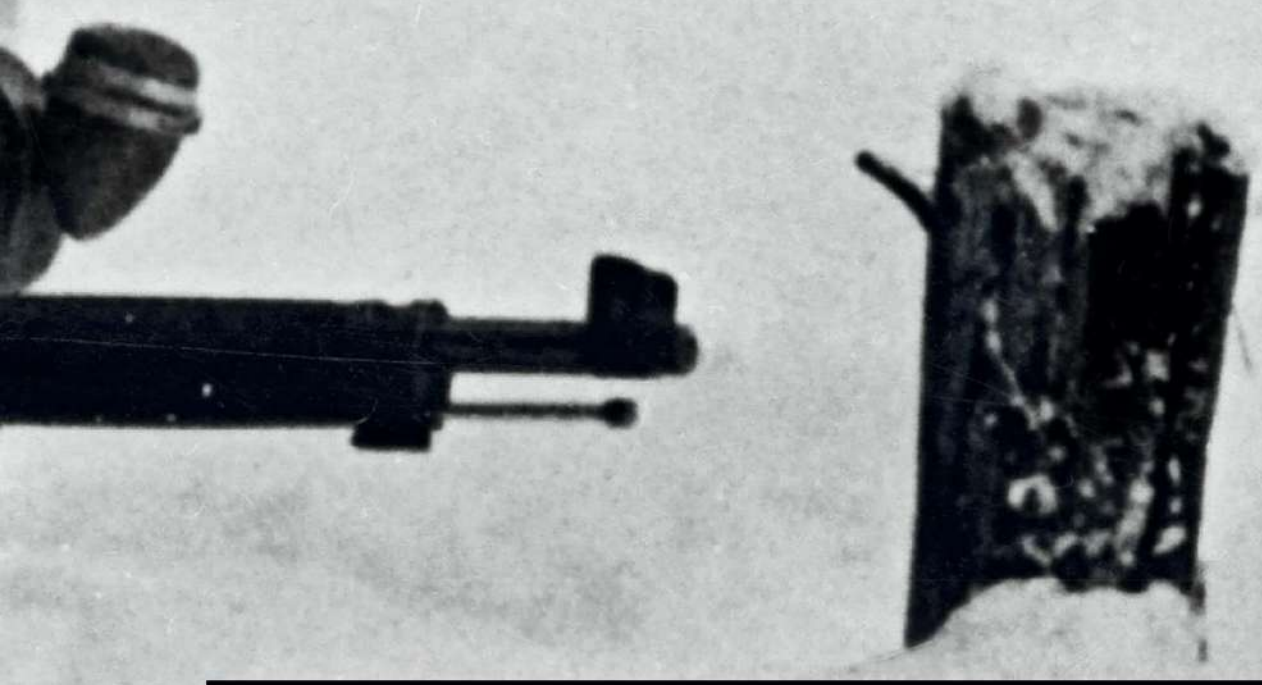
© Getty

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE ARRIVES IN BRITAIN

On 25 February, the first squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force landed in Britain. Around 400 airmen of 110 (Army Cooperation) Squadron travelled across the Atlantic and upon arrival were based near Salisbury. The squadron was equipped with a dozen Westland Lysander aircraft, and conducted training exercises for several months, not taking part in the Battle of Britain. This marked the first time a Canadian squadron was deployed overseas in wartime. Pictured are airmen of the RCAF being instructed in the loading of a machine-gun at the flight and gunner school in Canada.

© Getty

"ON 1 FEBRUARY, OVER 300,000 ARTILLERY SHELLS HERALDED THE ATTACK, WITH AROUND 600,000 TROOPS ATTACKING ACROSS THE NARROW ISTHMUS"



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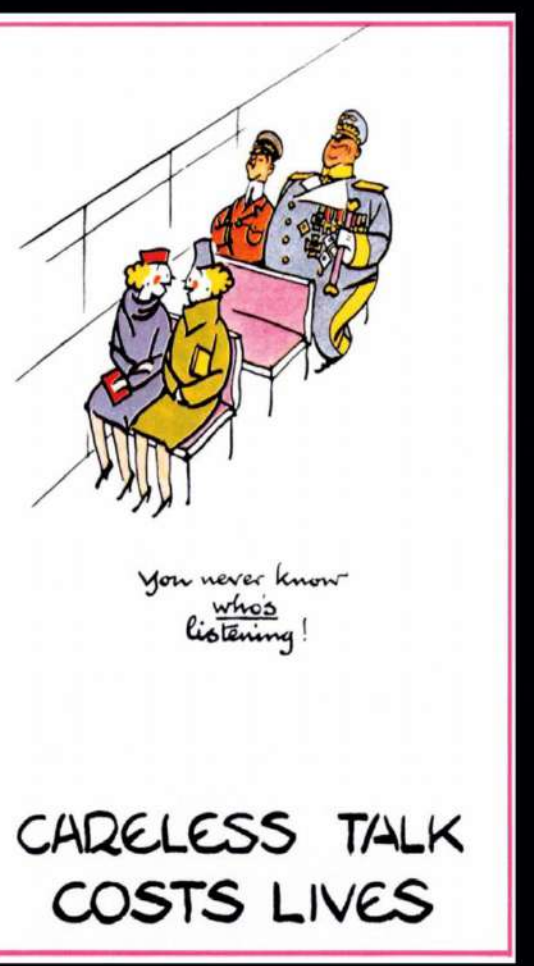
THE ALTMARK INCIDENT

On 16 February, German tanker Altmark was boarded by the crew of HMS Cossack, freeing 299 Allied prisoners. The British destroyer intercepted Altmark in Norwegian waters, under direct orders from Winston Churchill. The men being held were merchant seamen from vessels sunk by the battleship Admiral Graf Spee. Altmark was travelling through Norway's waters, at this time a neutral country, in order to transfer the prisoners to Germany. When Cossack intercepted the ship, there was a brief skirmish before the British successfully boarded and released the prisoners. Four Germans were killed during the rescue, and the Norwegian government later protested against Britain's violation of its neutrality.

CARELESS TALK

In February the British Ministry of Information launched one of its most iconic propaganda campaigns, aiming to prevent idle gossip that could potentially reveal critical information to the enemy. Cartoonist Kenneth Bird, known by his pseudonym Fougasse, produced a small series of the posters, depicting Hitler and Mussolini eavesdropping on conversations, accompanied by the slogan 'Careless talk costs lives'. Fougasse worked for the Ministry for the remainder of the war and was awarded a CBE in 1946.



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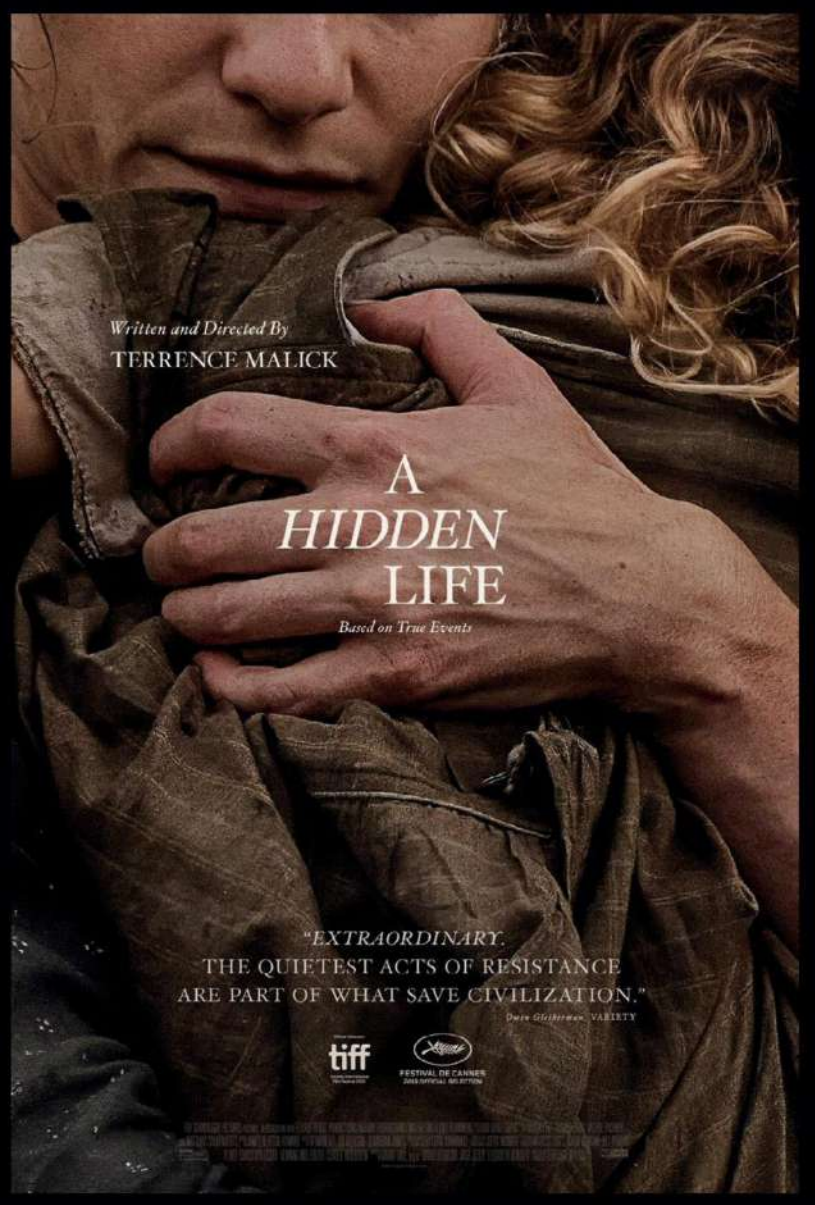


A HIDDEN LIFE

A DEEPLY SPIRITUAL DEPICTION OF RESISTANCE TO FASCISM DURING WARTIME

Director: Terrence Malick **Starring:** August Diehl, Valerie Pachner, Franz Rogowski, Bruno Ganz **Distributor:** Fox Searchlight **Released:** Out now

WWII conscientious objector Franz Jägerstätter was declared a martyr in 2007 and beatified by the Catholic Church. How a peasant from the tiny Alpine village of St Radegund, Austria, came to be so elevated in theological circles is beautifully examined and explained in director Terrence Malick's mighty, soaring drama. Spearheaded by a deeply affecting performance from German star August Diehl, *A Hidden Life* tackles profound themes with intellectual rigour and purpose, offering valuable insight into the mental strength it takes to resist pressure to conform.

Inspired by letters Jägerstätter penned in prison to his wife, as well as a movie about a man's stand against the poison of the Third Reich, it is the grandest love story. Those familiar with Malick's demanding, experimental, introspective aesthetic will give themselves over entirely to this three-hour epic, which at once feels cosmic and intimate. A general audience, however, might find it a bit heavy-going. Akin to a hike over inhospitable terrain in a blizzard, perhaps. Consider this a warning. Although spoken in the English language, with other scenes curiously in unsubtitled German, *A Hidden Life* is not your standard-issue war film or melodrama. Its narrative is elliptical, the dialogue is romantic, the tone serious-minded. Malick has carved out a unique career in American cinema and he has a penchant for tackling historical subjects. Those who recall the director's previous foray into the Second World War, *The Thin Red Line* (1999), will have some grounding in what to expect, how he operates, but 20 years on, the filmmaker's singular artistic qualities have grown bolder and even more uncompromising. He lifts cinema to the level of spiritual parable and philosophical investigation.

Jägerstätter's biographer has praised *A Hidden Life* for its authentic portrait of the relationship between Franz and his wife. Diehl and co-star Valerie Pachner are sensational together. We first meet them living their quiet, humble lives high up in the hills. Both are devout Catholics and their world feels so far away from malevolent events transpiring in towns and cities. Franz is suspicious of Nazi ideology and the march to war, but signs up, like all the men in the village, and goes off to basic training. He quickly finds himself at odds with military brass. Under no circumstances will he pledge allegiance to Adolf Hitler (the key obligation all soldiers must meet). This hardline stance snowballs into a righteous argument against tyranny and marks the unbending yokel for death. Meanwhile, at home, Franziska (Pachner) becomes ostracised by friends and the wider community. Her husband's actions are deemed cowardly and unpatriotic. Instead of breaking their bond, the Nazis and their followers strengthen Jägerstätter's refusal to bow to pressure of any kind. "I want to save my life, but not through lies," Franz tells a priest.

Faith, they say, can move mountains. In Jägerstätter's case, he refused to budge an inch. *A Hidden Life* is a glorious hymn to fortitude and human goodness in troubled times. Hope and light will forever ward off the darkness. **MC**

A HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS

THE STORY OF FOUR COURAGEOUS WOMEN WHO HELPED LIBERATE ITALY FROM FASCISM

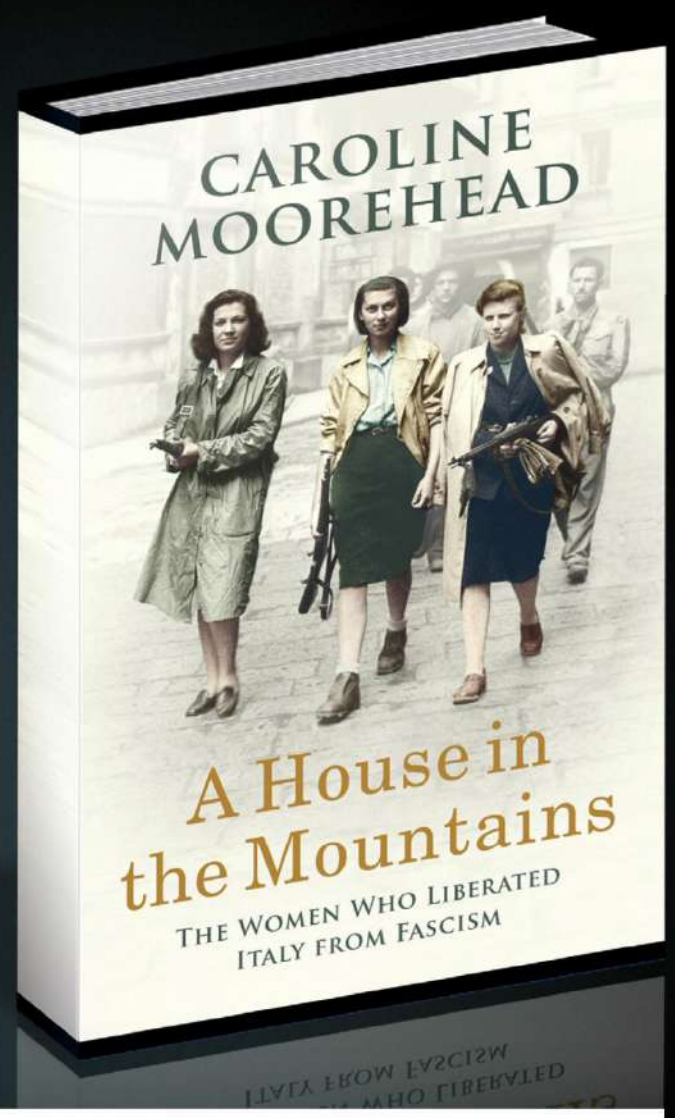
Writer: Caroline Moorehead
Publisher: Chatto & Windus
Price: £20
Released: Out now

In 1943, Italy changed sides in the war and joined the British and American armies engaged in a bitter struggle against the occupying German forces. The Allies were not alone in their fight to rout the Wehrmacht from Italian territory. Many thousands of anti-Fascist Partisans joined the Resistance movement, risking their lives to free their country from Nazi domination. Caroline Moorhead tells the story of Ada, Frida, Silvia and Bianca, four young Piedmontese women who participated with great valour in the Partisan struggle, living clandestinely in the mountains surrounding Turin.

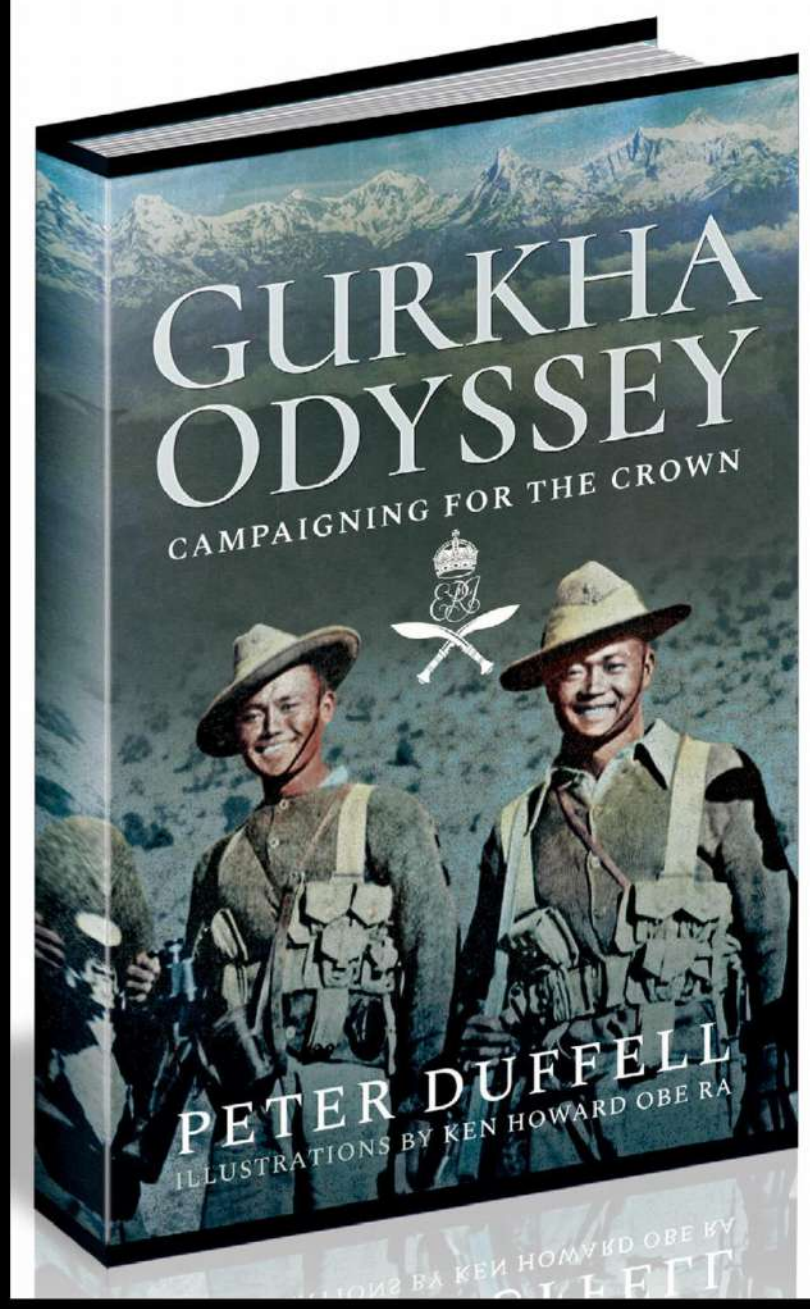
Italy was in a state of civil war in those fateful days, during which the women of the Resistance made an invaluable contribution to the eventual rout of Hitler's army. These women fought, carried messages between Partisan groups, as well as to the Allies, smuggled weapons to the fighters, provided safe houses, laid mines and took prisoners.

Moorehead offers a deeply-researched, fast-paced account of the Italian Resistance, a story not widely known to the general reader. Her four female protagonists were from the mountains and plains of northwest Italy, where the Germans held out until the closing days of the war.

This was at the very heart of the northern resistance and was where more Partisans proportionately fought and died than in any other part of the country. For Moorehead, the civil war was about creating "a new, fairer, democratic society, in which women were, by law, to be equal partners in work and in the family". This is what Ada, one of the four women portrayed in the book, called 'la nostra battaglia', 'our battle'. **JS**



"MOOREHEAD OFFERS A DEEPLY-RESEARCHED, FAST-PACED ACCOUNT OF THE ITALIAN RESISTANCE"



GURKHA ODYSSEY: CAMPAIGNING FOR THE CROWN

A MOVING TRIBUTE FROM A FORMER MAJOR GENERAL OF THE GURKHA BRIGADE

Writer: Peter Duffell **Publisher:** Pen & Sword **Price:** £25

In 1814, the East India Company's Bengal Army was at war with Nepal and the British first encountered Gurkha hill-men. One British soldier wrote, "I never saw such steadiness or bravery … Run they would not, and of death they seemed to have no fear." Impressed by their martial spirit, the company soon began recruiting them into its own ranks. And for over 200 years, the gallant Gurkhas have fought alongside the British, from the northwest frontier of India through two World Wars to the battlefields of the Falklands and Afghanistan's Helmand Province.

Lieutenant-General Sir Peter Duffell is well-qualified to pay them a personal tribute. He served as a regular officer in the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, where as a young company commander he was awarded the Military Cross leading his men in clandestine operations against Indonesia, later becoming Major-General of the Brigade of Gurkhas. His concern is not to provide a comprehensive account but rather to paint a more intimate picture, bringing out the character and spirit of these loyal and dedicated soldiers.

In this he succeeds admirably, whether retracing the route of the Sirmoor Battalion (the fore-runner of 2nd Gurkha) in the Indian Mutiny of 1857, or recounting his own experiences of command in the Malaysian Emergency. Duffell dispels a few myths along the way and takes us on a fascinating journey through Gurkha history. **MJ**

FROM THE COLD WAR TO THE WAR ON TERROR

A HOMAGE TO THE RAF'S BOMB DISPOSAL UNIT

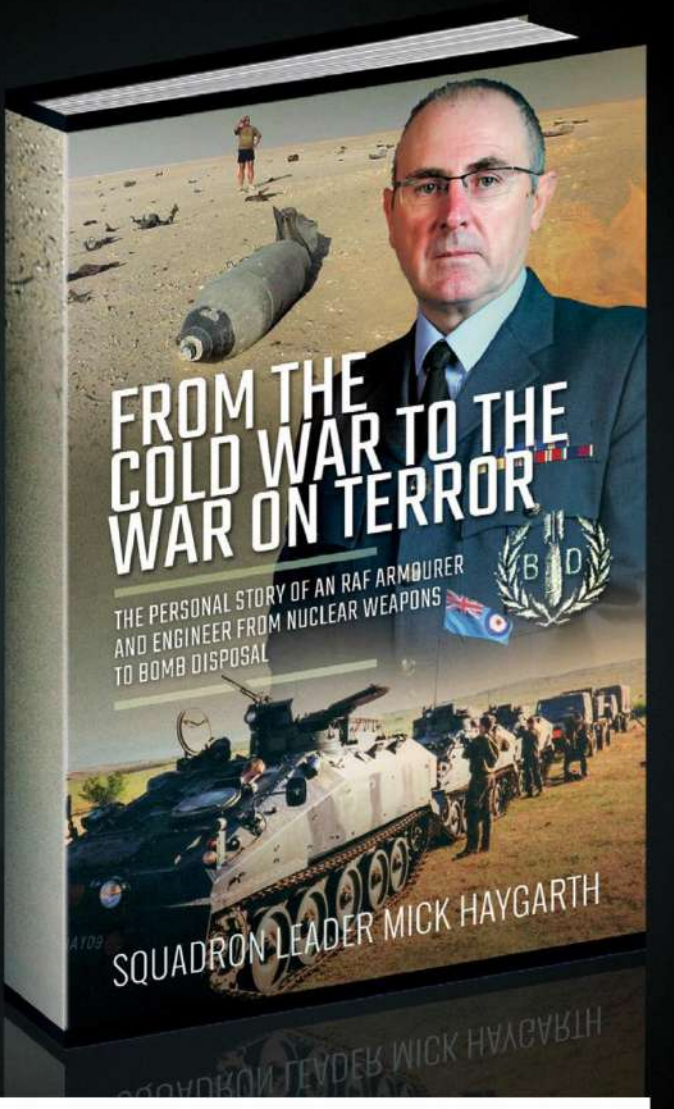
Author: Squadron Leader Mick Haygarth **Publisher:** Pen & Sword **Price:** £19.99 **Released:** Out now

Squadron Leader Mick Haygarth has written a fascinating memoir. He joined the RAF as a weapons technician, served in the Buccaneer Nuclear Weapon Loading Team at the height of the Cold War and then – after passing his bomb disposal courses – did tours of duty in the Falklands, Kosovo and Iraq. He took charge of Squadron 5131 (the RAF's only bomb disposal unit) as it withdrew from Iraq and carried out operations in Afghanistan. Formed over 75 years ago, this unit will shortly be disbanded.

Haygarth's bravery and professionalism shine through. He relates numerous hair-raising episodes in matter-of-fact fashion. In Kosovo, his convoy of vehicles accelerates to the front of a retreating Serbian armoured column before realising its mistake and performing an abrupt U-turn.

In Basrah, he is ferried to an ordnance clearing meeting through the city's notorious back-streets in a beat-up car, in civilian attire, with a 9mm pistol stuffed in the waistband of his trousers. "What could possibly go wrong?" he asks.

The book's contents are not always easy to navigate. There is little chronological detail and a glossary of abbreviations would have been helpful, but Haygarth's pride in the work of Squadron 5131 (whose achievements are set out in the epilogue) is timely and justified. It is sad that its distinguished record of service is now coming to an end. **MJ**

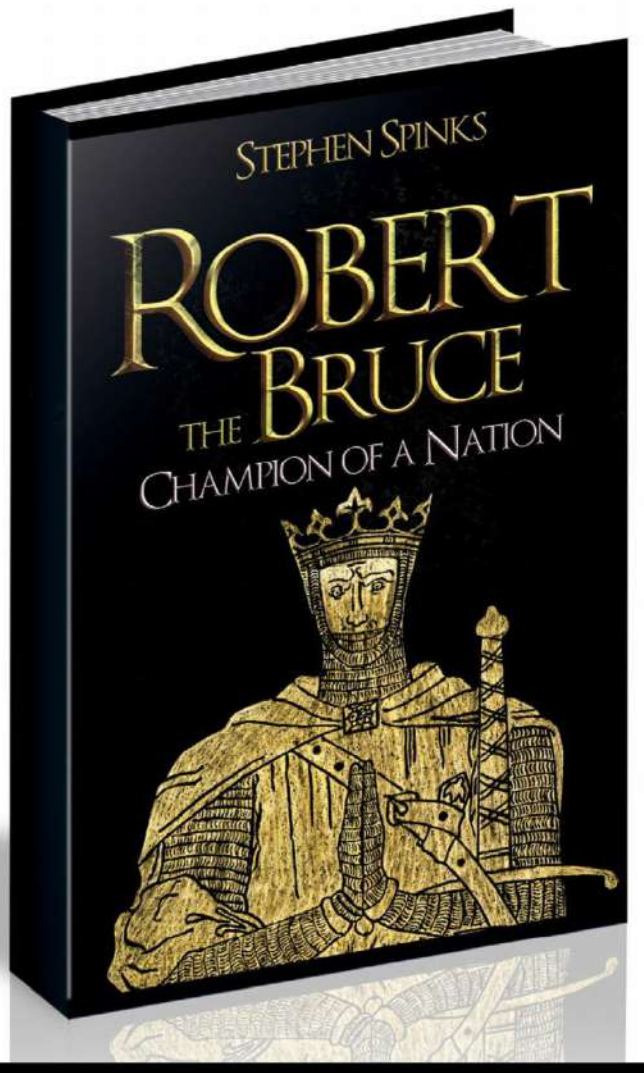


ROBERT THE BRUCE: CHAMPION OF A NATION

EXPLORE THE DEEP ROOTS OF THE SCOTTISH DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Writer: Stephen Spinks **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £20 **Released:** Out now

For most people in England, and not a few in Scotland, the name Robert the Bruce will evoke vague memories of Bannockburn, some even vaguer recollections of a story about a spider attempting to spin its web and, for those of a certain age, attempts to unpick the historical from the completely made up in the portrayal of Robert in *Braveheart* (no, he did not betray William Wallace and he probably did not fight against him). So the publication of this new biography of Robert by Stephen Spinks is a welcome chance to bring the man who ensured Scotland's independence for 400 years out from the shadows of forgetting and Hollywood myth-making.



Spinks has written a classic narrative history of Robert's life, beginning with a necessary preamble into the historical situation leading up to his birth – during which the relations between Scottish and English crowns had been most amicable – and taking in the disaster that struck the Scottish succession in 1286 when Alexander III died, falling from a cliff, his sons having predeceased him, leaving as heir his three-year-old granddaughter, Margaret, the Maid of Norway. The crisis metastasised when Margaret herself died, aged seven, on her way back to Scotland. Into this vacuum, the Scots' over-mighty neighbour, Edward I, King of England, began to assert his own claim to be overlord of the Scots. This claim, which in Edward's mind rapidly became his right, was based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's Medieval bestseller, *The History Of The Kings Of Britain* – a work of supposed history in which Geoffrey enthusiastically filled gaps with the products of his fertile imagination – that found the origin of the Scottish and English crowns in the sons of a refugee Trojan prince, Brutus. Edward based his claim on the wearer of the Scottish crown owing allegiance to the wearer of the English crown on account of the latter being descended from the eldest son of Brutus. Edward, one of the most formidable warriors of his time, set about claiming his birthright, initiating the wars for Scottish independence that would continue for all of Robert's adult life.

It was a vivid time of double crossing, battles and personalities who resound down the centuries and Spinks does an excellent job of bringing them all to life, from Edward's bulldozer tenacity to Robert's youthful ruthlessness and his maturing into a soldier, king and statesman of genius. By setting the scene carefully, Spinks makes the many changes of allegiance understandable within the context of the times, before leading up to the climactic Battle of Bannockburn, when Robert, seizing an opportunity gifted by new intelligence, switched from his preferred guerrilla tactics to a sudden, unexpected and devastating defeat for the English, now marching under the banner of Edward's less gifted but still determined son, Edward II. The war did not end with Bannockburn, and Spinks maintains the narrative as he tells of Robert's long, and eventually successful, struggle to have his claim as King of Scots recognised by the English and Christendom in general. Highly recommended. **EA**

"SPINKS HAS WRITTEN A CLASSIC NARRATIVE HISTORY OF ROBERT'S LIFE"

INVASION

THE FORGOTTEN FRENCH BID TO CONQUER ENGLAND

DID THE FRENCH NEARLY CONQUER ENGLAND IN THE 14TH CENTURY? DUNCAN CAMERON ARGUES THAT THEY DID

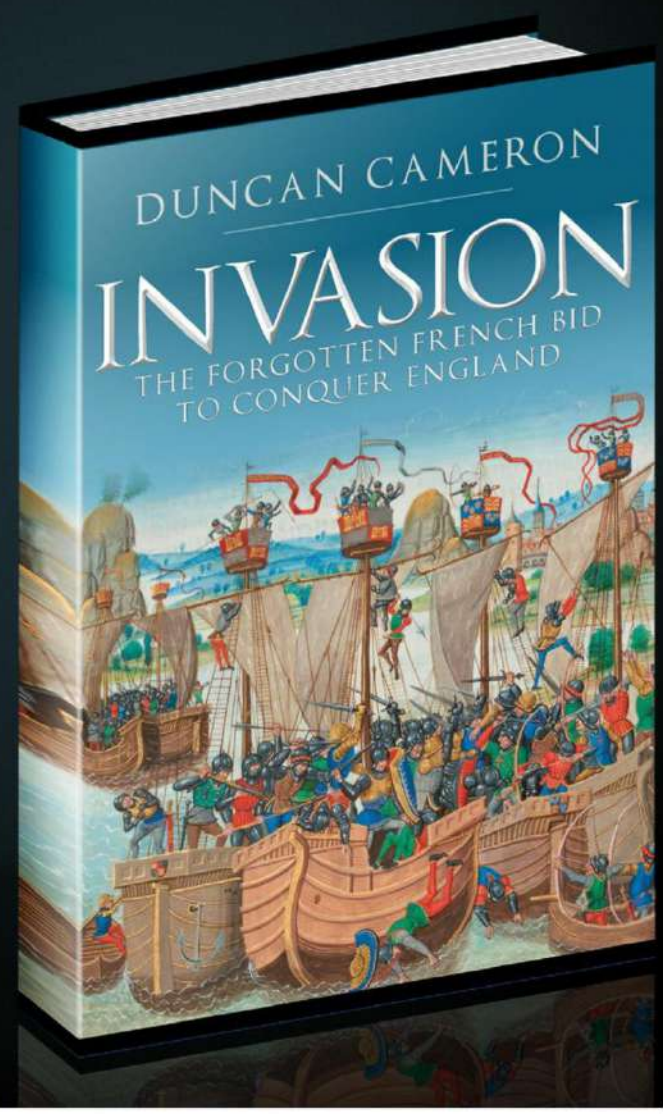
Writer: Duncan Cameron
Publisher: Amberley **Price:** £20
Released: Out now

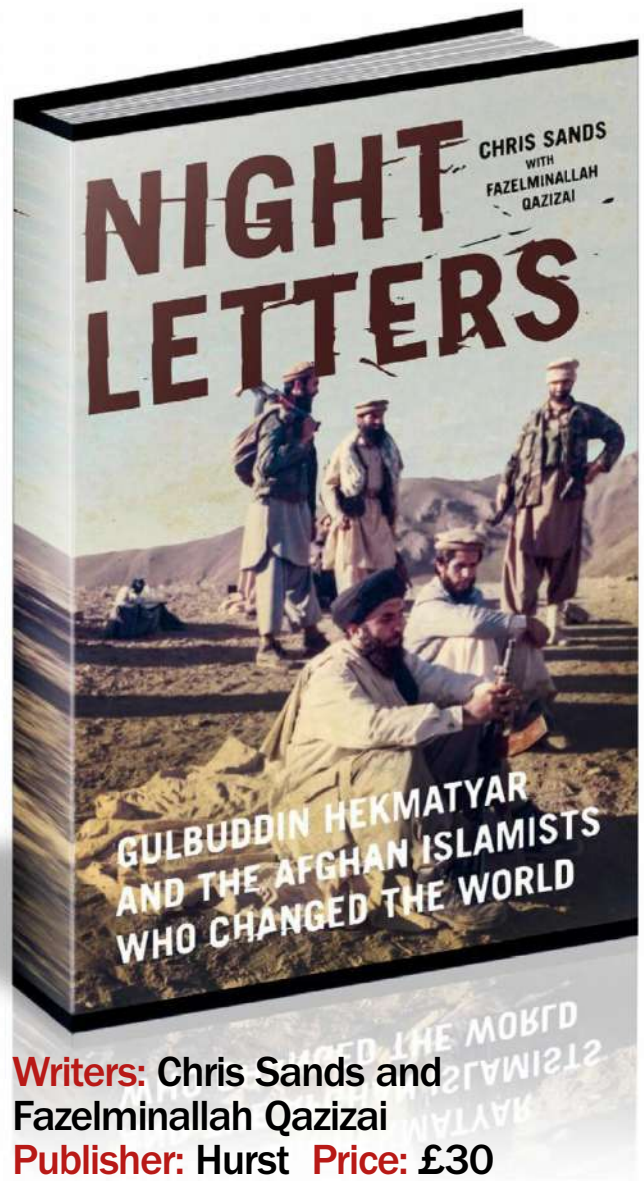
The author, Duncan Cameron, makes his bold claim right up there in the title and subtitle – *Invasion: The Forgotten French Bid To Conquer England*. So the question arises, after 266 pages does Cameron succeed in convincing the reader that the attempts by the Valois kings to turn back English aggression during the successive reigns of Edward III (who ruled from 1327 to 1377) and Richard II (1377 to 1399) actually amounted to a serious attempt to invade and conquer England? Not really. Perhaps a more accurate title for the book, and one that indicates where its real strengths lie, would be *By Fire And Sea: The Unsung Role Of Naval And Marine Warfare In The First Decades Of The Hundred Years' War*.

It is certainly true that, bedazzled by the great Edwardian victories at the Battle of Crécy and the Siege of Calais, and the even more remarkable victory of Edward's son, the Black Prince, at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356, contemporary chroniclers and later historians have tended to emphasise the land battles of these early decades of the Hundred Years' War.

While not surprising – Edward's forces at the Battle of Neville's Cross also managed to take captive King David II of Scotland, holding him captive and for ransom until 1357, meaning that for a year Edwardian England held the kings of France and Scotland captive – Cameron makes clear in his book that cross-channel raiders played a much larger part in the French resistance to the destructive English raids, the chevauchée, which were a key element in Edward's strategy, than has been acknowledged.

Faced with English armies burning and looting across northern France with the strategic aim of rendering the French incapable of fighting back, successive French kings authorised destructive counter chevauchée, employing mercenary crews of Genoan and Monegasque sailors and marines to man oared galleys as the spearheads for these amphibious raids on the ports of southern England. Some towns such as Winchelsea that had previously become wealthy on the proceeds of the lucrative wine trade with Gascony (a French province that, by the complicated laws of inheritance, was actually the personal property of Edward III) never recovered from the devastation caused by these combined naval attacks, the Genoans and Monegasque marines storming ashore, burning and looting, while French cogs, the mainstay of North Sea trade, waited at anchor to take all the looted goods home. The final French 'invasion' of England never actually happened, with the main invasion force defeated by weather and logistics, thus making the big reveal at the end something of a damp squib. But the journey there reveals a fascinating and little-known side to 14th century warfare. **EA**





NIGHT LETTERS

THE FIRST ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHY OF GULBUDDIN HEKMATYAR, THE NOTORIOUS AFGHAN WARLORD, POLITICIAN AND ANTI-SOVIET MUJAHID

Writers: Chris Sands and Fazelminallah Qazizai
Publisher: Hurst **Price:** £30

In 1975, the leaders of a fledgling Afghan Islamist fundamentalist movement fled to neighbouring Pakistan to escape government persecution. Two decades later one of the rebels, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, was serving as prime minister of Afghanistan. In this biography of Afghanistan's most notorious militant two journalists, one British, the other Afghan, bring together their first-hand experience to provide a compelling account of Hekmatyar and the Hizb-e Islami guerrilla organisation he came to lead.

Chris Sands and Fazelminallah Qazizai explore the secret history of this powerful and charismatic figure, who played a key role in the war against Soviet and, later, NATO invading troops. Hekmatyar cut a particularly menacing figure, who allegedly began his political career as a communist but swung to the other extreme with a vengeance to become a feared and merciless Islamist firebrand.

He is a character possessed of diabolical ambition and tireless activity, from hosting bomb-making classes to serving as Taliban network commander, while not disinclined to accept backing from the CIA to fund what is now his Hezb-e Islami political party through Pakistan's Inter-services Intelligence (ISI). In a word, a veritable Machiavellian Afghan disposed to cross any number of political lines to achieve his objectives.

As the authors point out, he always saw his movement as an effective mentor of violent international jihad, but he took care to stand back from the firing line when it came to implementing this policy. "His reasoning was both logical and cynical … This approach allowed the party to avoid direct confrontation with powerful enemies, among them the US."

The book is very much likely to stand as the definitive narrative of this powerful Afghan revolutionary and the most important, yet little understood, international Islamist movement of the past 50 years. **JS**

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5 BEST BOOKS ON

DREADNOUGHTS

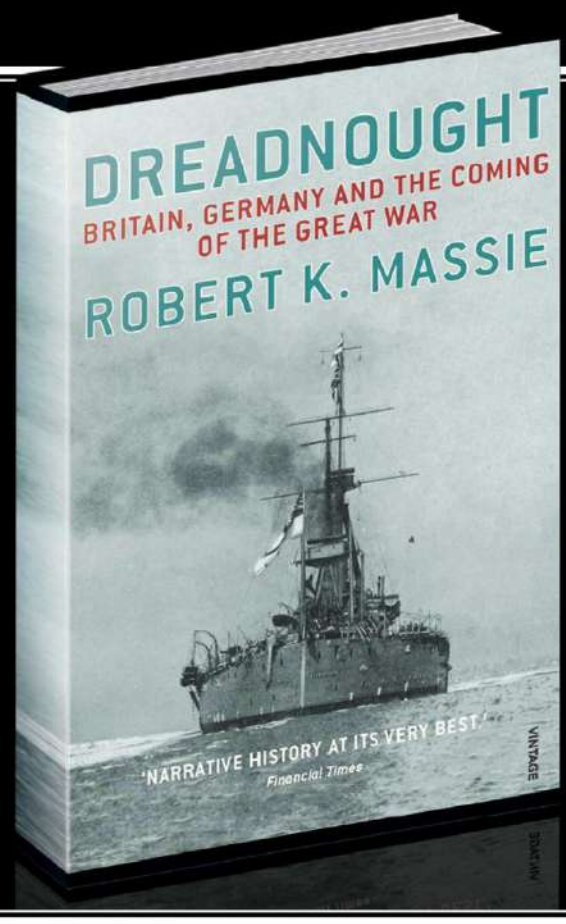
At the dawn of the 20th century, these mighty steel behemoths proje ted modern naval power across the globe

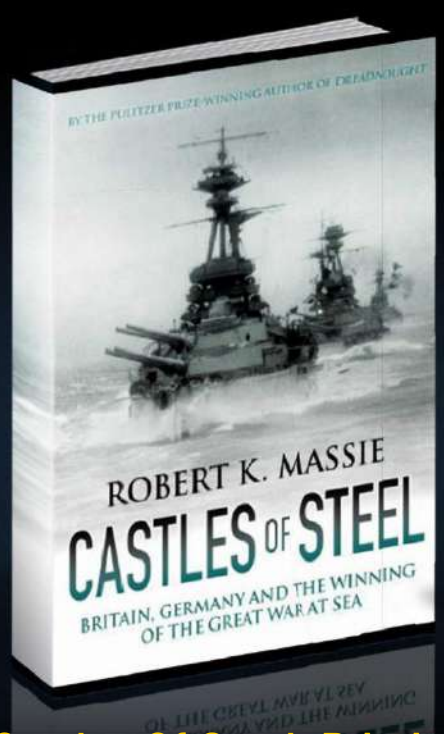
DREADNOUGHT

Britain, Germany And The Coming Of The Great War
Robert K. Massie

The 1906 introduction of HMS Dreadnought, a modern battleship of steel and big guns, rendered other warship types obsolete and came to describe the generation of naval power that sparked a monumental arms race. The Dreadnought class became central to the naval rivalry that contributed to the coming of World War I.

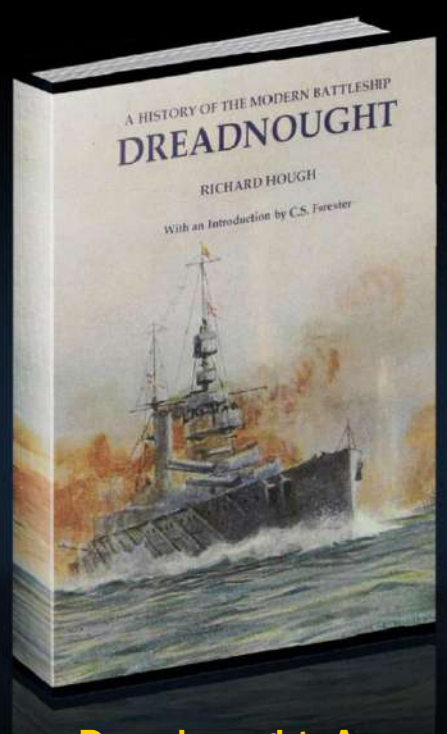
"THE DREADNOUGHT CLASS BECAME CENTRAL TO THE NAVAL RIVALRY THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE COMING OF WORLD WAR I"





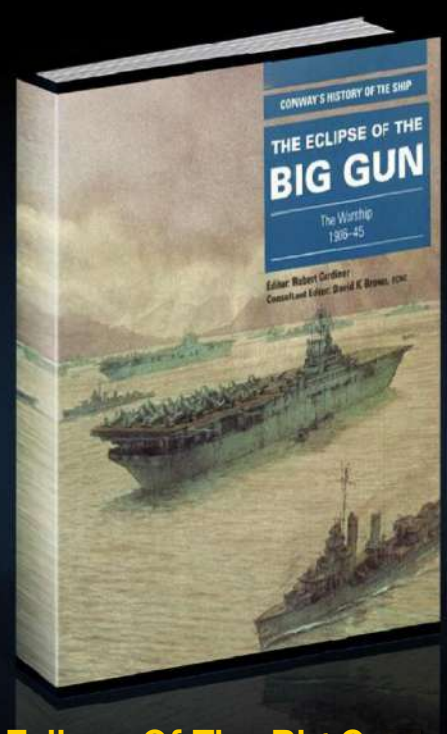
Castles Of Steel: Britain, Germany And The Winning Of The Great War At Sea
Robert K. Massie

The decisive confrontations of the British Royal Navy and the German High Seas Fleet are described. Their clashes, punctuated by the deployment of the powerful Dreadnought class battleships, are discussed in context with the prosecution of World War I.



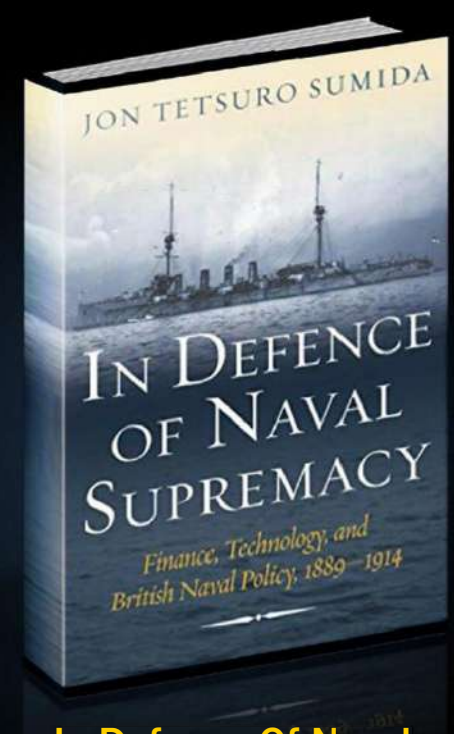
Dreadnought: A History Of The Modern Battleship
Richard Hough

The development of the modern battleships that dominated naval strategy and tactics during the early 20th century is detailed. Major powers engaged in an arms race during an era of empire building and imperialism, and the Dreadnought class of battleship ushered in an unprecedented period of emphasis on supreme naval power.



Eclipse Of The Big Gun: The Warship 1906-1945
Robert Gardiner and David K. Brown

The authors describe the rise of the modern battleship, particularly with the Dreadnought class, and follow the supremacy of the big gun through its period of naval dominance. Subsequently, the narrative discusses the decline of the battleship as the aircraft carrier and other warship types emerged by the mid-20th century.



In Defence Of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology, And British Naval Pol cy, 1889-1914
John Tetsuro Sumida

The British Admiralty and the island nation's naval policy during the critical quarter century prior to World War I are explored. The British perspective gave rise to the powerful Dreadnought class of battleship, rendering older designs obsolete and shaping military and foreign policy in the run-up to the war.

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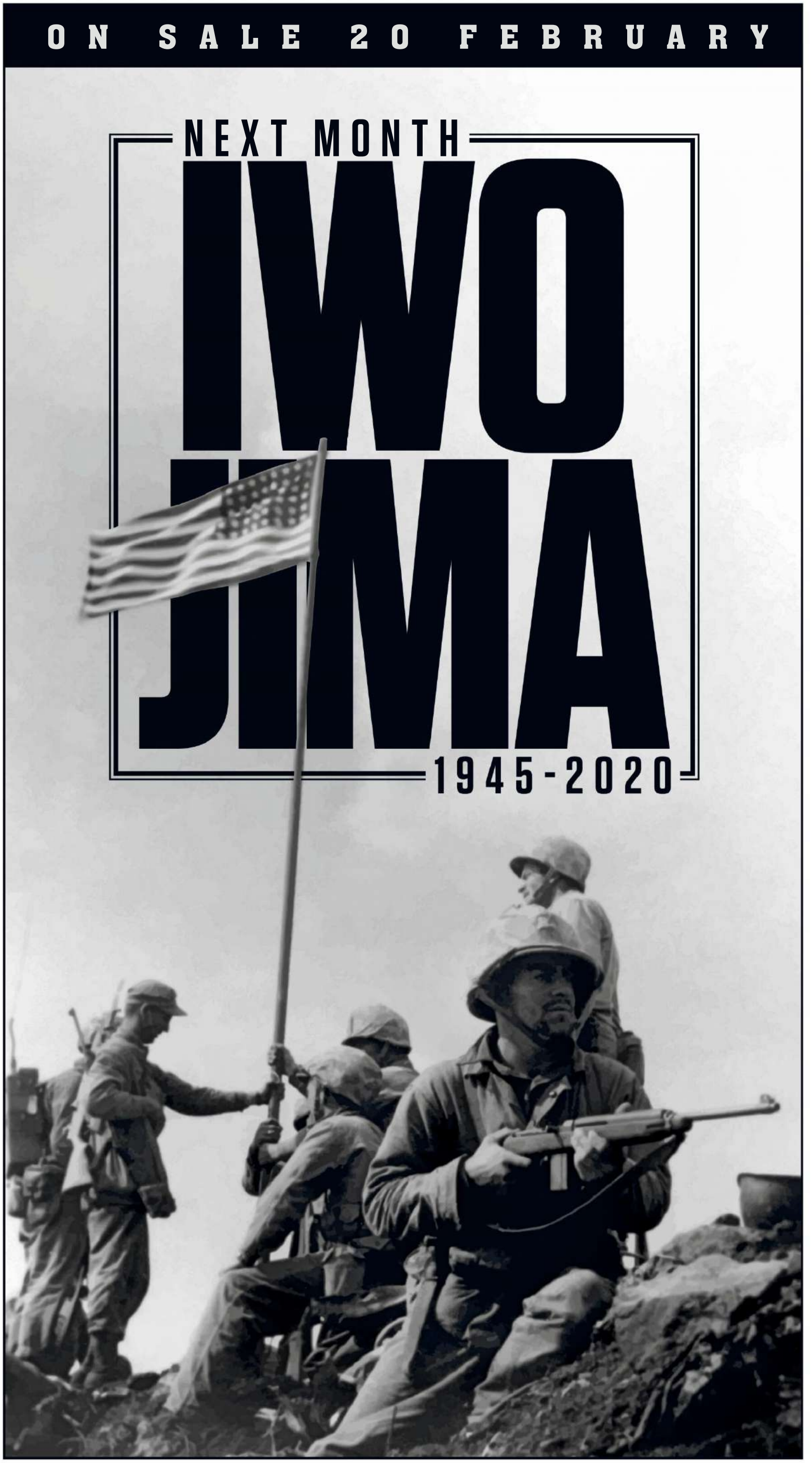

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MEDINA SIDONIA'S ARMOUR

This elaborate steel suit was made in Italy for the ill-fated commander of the Spanish Armada after his famous 1588 defeat

Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, 7th Duke of Medina Sidonia (1550-1615), came from one of the most illustrious noble families in Spain. The inheritor of a huge fortune, he was well regarded by King Philip II who appointed him as captain-general of the Andalusian coast in January 1588. However, his destiny soon lay at sea.

Following the death of the formidable admiral the marquess of Santa Cruz in February 1588, Medina Sidonia was appointed as the commander of the Spanish Armada. The duke, who had little military experience on land or sea, forcefully protested his appointment in vain. Nevertheless, despite his reservations, he successfully organised the huge fleet and established good relations with his subordinate commanders.

Source: Wiki / Royal Museums Greenwich

Compared to the elegance of his armour, Medina Sidonia's command of the Spanish Armada resulted in a bloody fiasco

© Alamy

Despite the failure of the Armada, Medina Sidonia retained his naval title of 'Captain-General of the Ocean Sea' and served until the end of the Anglo-Spanish War in 1604

Once at sea, Medina Sidonia fared less well and the Armada's performance against the numerically inferior Royal Navy was poor. Although he was personally courageous, the duke's fleet fell victim to English fireships and then unfavourable weather conditions. Dozens of Spanish ships were dramatically lost along with approximately 20,000 dead although Medina Sidonia was not relieved of his command.

The Armada was a notable naval failure but Medina Sidonia could still afford to look the part of a formidable warrior. This suit of armour was made for him c.1590 in Milan and is finely crafted. Made from steel with silver inlay, the armour would also have had leather and velvet accessories. It was designed for use on horseback either in battle or tournament jousting. The right side of the breastplate has holes for bolting a lance rest and the suit would have been originally complemented with other pieces that could be used for combat or sport.

Milan was ruled by Spain in the late 16th century, which meant that Medina Sidonia had easy access to some of the greatest armouries in Europe

THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM

Medina Sidonia's armour forms part of the collections of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, United States. With free admission for visitors, the museum's collection has artwork and artefacts spanning over seven millennia.
For more information visit: www.thewalters.org

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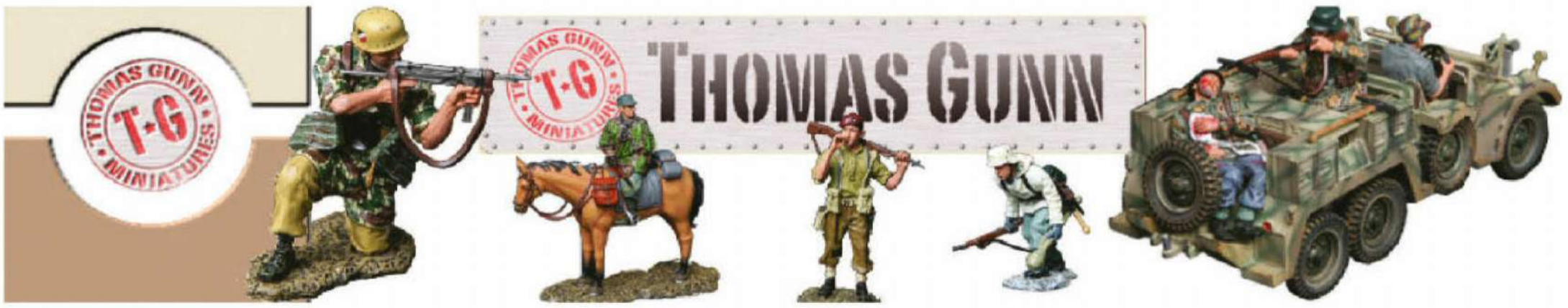

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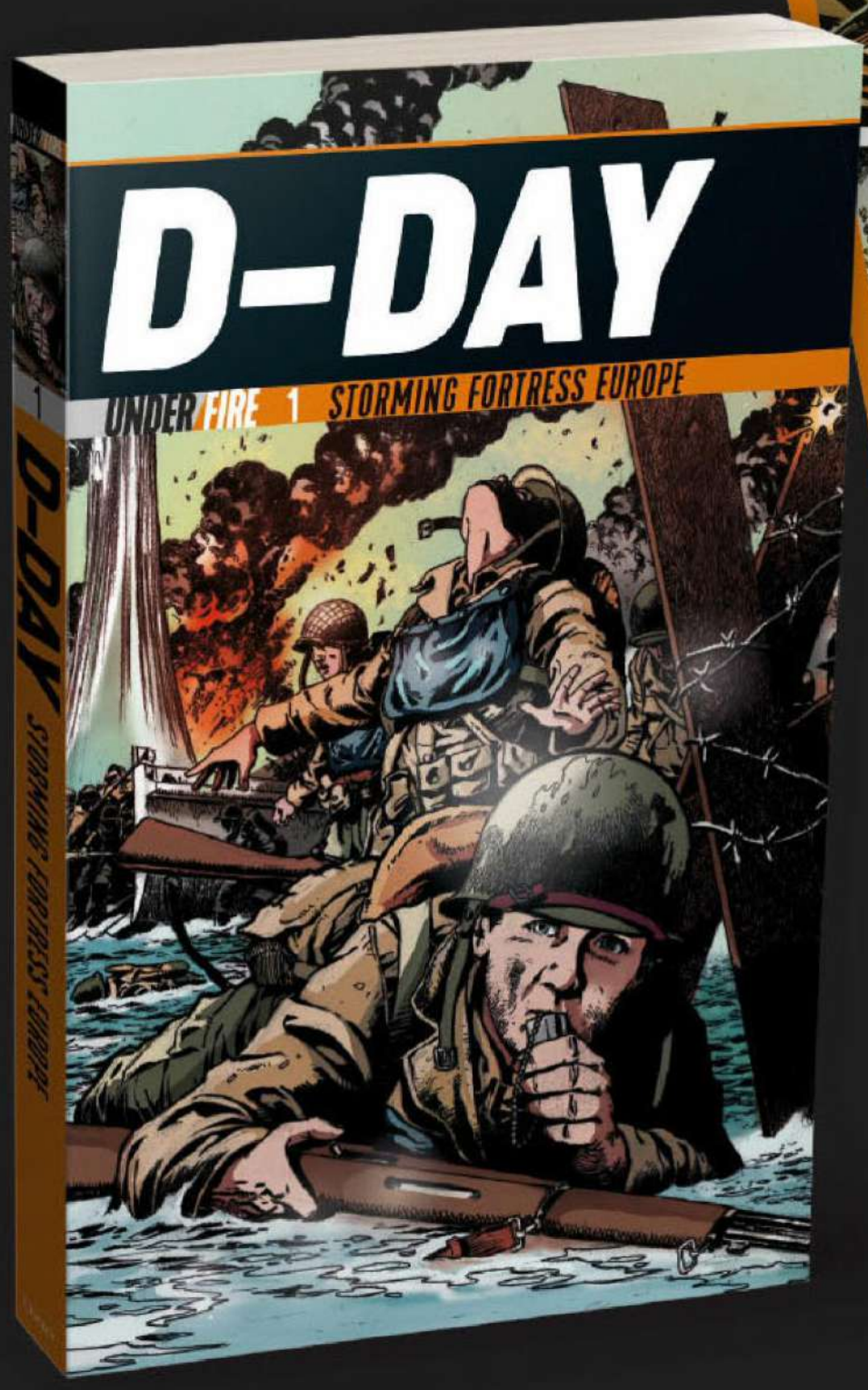

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